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ABSTRACT

Drawing from both research and practice, the articles in this collection address a number of issues related to the reading and writing connection. The 24 articles are grouped into five sections: "Reading, Writing, and Thinking"; "The Parts and the Whole"; "Reading for Writing"; "Contexts for Literacy"; and "Some Pedagogical Concerns." Among the topics discussed in the articles are the following: (1) thinking skills in English and across the curriculum, (2) techniques for teaching audience analysis, (3) metacomprehension, (4) invented spelling, (5) using extended reading to motivate elementary school students' compositions, (6) teaching Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson," (7) teaching students to "feel" literature intelligently, (8) measuring response to literature, (9) common concerns of reading and writing for students for whom English is a second language, (10) resources for involving parents in literacy development, (11) writing as a remediation device for disabled readers, (12) issues in designing the language arts curriculum, (13) composition instruction in Ireland, (14) spelling instruction, (15) the precis as a cure-all for reading and writing ills, and (16) women's literature. (FL)

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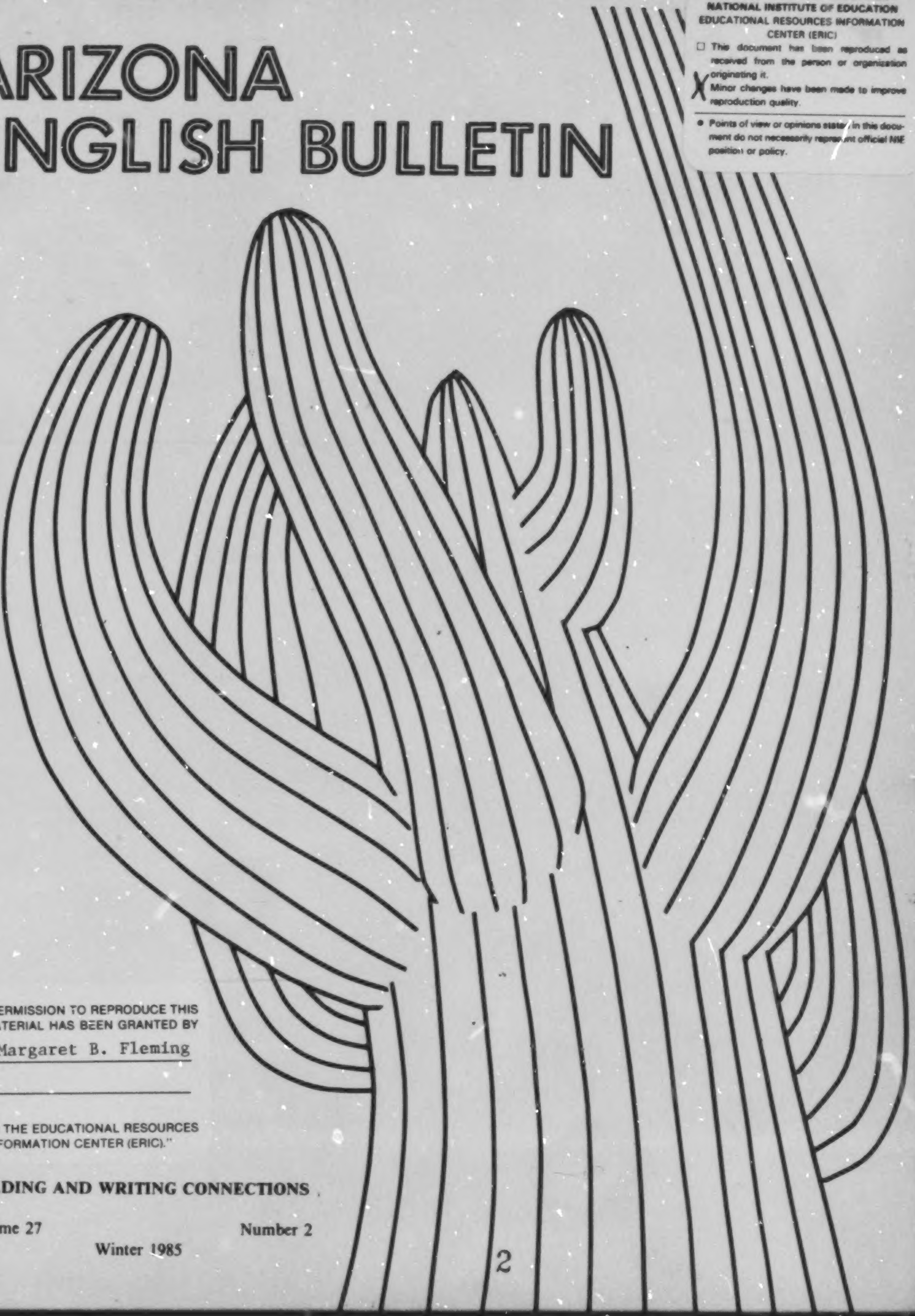

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READING AND WRITING CONNECTIONS

Volume 27 Number 2
Winter 1985

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ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN - - - - - - - - A Member of the NCTE Exchange Agreement

The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN is a publication of the Arizona English Teachers Association, a nonprofit state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. The BULLETIN exists to create effective statewide articulation of English and Language Arts teachers at all levels, to increase awareness of new ideas, programs, and movements in English, and to improve instruction at every level.

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Topics and deadlines for forthcoming issues are as follows:

Fall 1985	Interactive Writing	(Aug. 15, 1985)
Winter 1986	The Classroom and the Community	(Dec. 1, 1985)
Spring 1986	The Language of ___________	(Feb. 1, 1986)

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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

"Interactive Writing"
Fall 1985

The title of this issue borrows the term "interactive" from video and computer programming to suggest the interaction that can go on at various stages of the writing process. The pre-writing stage--and where does it actually begin?--often includes dialogue between writer and possible readers, between student and teacher, between student and student, between writer and publisher. The actual organizing, drafting, and writing stages may involve interaction between writer and potential audiences, writer and other writers, student and tutor, student and peers, student and teacher, writer and editor. Revision may involve any of the above. In the past we have often subscribed to the romantic notion that writers shut themselves away from everyone else and spin everything out of their own guts. For all but a few, this process may actually be counterproductive. How can we best stimulate the kind of interaction that will be productive instead? (Deadline August 15, 1985)

"The Classroom and the Community"
Winter 1986

How is what we do in the classroom related to what goes on in the community? What kinds of reading do typical adults enjoy? Is the usage we teach in school modeled on anything outside? What kinds of writing are useful in various businesses and professions? Can the skills of critical reading and thinking be carried over to life after graduation? How can the community become more involved in what goes on in school? Is the community now involved in ways that are conducive to educational goals or the reverse? How much accountability is desirable or possible? (Deadline Dec. 1, 1985)

"The Language of ____________"
Spring 1986

Every profession, every hobby, every social encounter, every age level, every region, every group of any kind has its own unique features of language and its own conventions for language use. What are some of these distinctive features and conventions? How do doctors talk to patients? to nurses? to other doctors? How do parents talk to children? teachers to students? executives to janitors? What is distinctive about the language of a political speech? a perfume advertisement? a sports report? What formulas are conventional for chain letters, wedding invitations, legal contracts? Do conventions ever get in the way of clear communication? What can we learn from analyzing the social and ceremonial uses of language? (Deadline Feb. 1, 1986)

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FROM THE EDITOR

What do reading and writing have in common with riding a bicycle? The answer is "not much." Think back to when you first learned to ride. Probably you can remember that magical moment when you had finally mastered the complex interrelationship among balancing, pedaling, and steering, and suddenly COULD RIDE although a moment before you couldn't.

If you try to remember when you first learned to read or to write, however, it will probably be much harder to pinpoint one moment. You may remember when you first realized that letters were symbols for sounds and could begin to decode them. Or you may remember the first time you were able to form the letters of your name with a pencil. But in retrospect you could hardly say that at either of those points you had learned to read or to write.

The truth is that reading and writing are not skills like riding a bicycle, mastered once and for all at a specific moment. Rather they are processes spread out along a continuum, skills developed very gradually over time with practice. And yet I have heard many people--even college professors who should know better--say things like "Why don't the high schools teach students to write?" and "If students haven't learned to read, they shouldn't be in college." Statements like these imply that reading and writing are like bike-riding, learned once and never forgotten.

It would be wrong, however, to represent the continuum of learning to read or to write as one-dimensional; reading skill does not develop in a straight line from Dr. Seuss to PARADISE LOST, nor writing skill from "I luv mom" to the great American novel. Different genres require different skills: the student who can decipher directions on a blueprint may be unable to make sense of MACBETH and vice versa; the student who writes original and insightful poetry may be toally unable to synthesize various sources into a coherent documented essay. The art of organizing and supporting a persuasive argument does not automatically carry over to the production of verisimilitude in dramatic dialogue, nor does the skill of reading novels guarantee success with philosophy or criticism.

What professors mean, of course, when they say "can't read" or "can't write" is that students have not attained whatever level of proficiency they think appropriate for their particular purposes, but in fact the high schools have been teaching, and students have been learning, with or without teachers. Students who "can't read" what is expected of them in school may be very proficient in reading comic books, for example. They have more to learn, of course, but then, who doesn't? Many teachers who feel confident that they "can write," that is, can express themselves in the modes they are normally required to produce--articles, reports, letters, memos--might learn valuable humility by attempting something different--a satire, a TV script, a villanelle.

The more we learn about the processes of reading and writing--and research has taught us a great deal in the past few decades--the more difficult it is to explain either process with an oversimplified model. But although research has also revealed many explicit connections between the two processes, there are still unanswered questions, and educators have valid differences of opinion about them. Should students learn to read before they write or write before they read? Should they be taught correct spelling or allowed to invent their own? Will an intensive reading program improve students' writing skills without direct instruction? Should literature be the subject matter for writing courses in high school and college? Should students write in literary forms as one way of learning to read them with appreciation? These questions and others are dealt with in the articles in this issue. They should be useful to all of us as we try to help our students become, not bike riders who can reach once and for all a moment of achievement, but artists, who can add to their repertoires another technique, another approach, another form to work in as writers or to appreciate as readers.

Margaret Fleming

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READING AND WRITING CONNECTIONS

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THINKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH--AND ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Charles Suhor

Widespread concern has been expressed in recent years by educators, journalists, and the public at large concerning students' poor thinking skills. The National Assessment of Educational Progress has reported that students show weaknesses in the logical processes required for clear communication. In _A Nation at Risk_, The National Commission on Excellence in Education noted that students have a poor command of intellectual skills such as drawing inferences and solving problems. And the College Board's Project EQuality booklet, _Academic Preparation for College_, called for the teaching of reasoning as a basic academic competency, along with reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics. Finally, employers frequently report that young people lack the ability to think through problems and offer alternative solutions.

In spite of acknowledgement of the need to help students develop intellectual skills, little consensus exists about how thinking skills should be taught and who should teach them. Should thinking be taught as a separate skill, as part of each subject area, or as both? Do English and language arts teachers have a special role in the teaching of thinking skills? How do concepts like language and writing across the curriculum relate to thinking skills instruction? These issues will be discussed in this digest.

Thinking Skills Taught in Isolation

Numerous researchers and teachers believe that thinking skills can and should be the focus of special exercises, texts, and programs. In _Cognitive Process Instruction_, Jack Lockhead (1972) speaks of the need "to isolate specific cognitive skills and to design instructional material appropriate for each skill." Edward DeBono, author of the CoRT thinking skills program, claims that "generalizable thinking skills" can and should be taught, in addition to "local skills" required in particular subject matter areas. Howard Citron of Innovative Sciences believes that we must "systematically develop students' thinking and reasoning abilities in a 'purer' sense and directly build. . . transfer of these abilities to academic learning and real behavior." The idea that certain generic thinking abilities underlie school learning is basic to thinking skills programs like Strategic Reasoning, Structure of Intellect, and others (Bossone 1983).

However, there is little agreement among psychologists on what constitutes thinking, and no one has developed a compelling taxonomy of thinking skills for use in educational programs. Different program developers cite Piaget, Bloom, Guilford, Feuerstein, Erikson, and others as credible sources for their

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Charles Suhor is Deputy Executive Director of NCTE. This article was produced for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.

work. Each argues persuasively for a particular theoretical approach and makes claims for the feasibility of classroom applications. Researchers' claims for the effectiveness of various approaches are advanced cautiously and disputed vigorously.

Thinking Skills Taught in Each Subject Area

Ideally, training in thinking processes would be woven into subject area study. Two decades ago, much attention was given to Jerome Bruner's idea that the concepts central to each discipline can be taught through the discovery method (1960). In recent years, specialists in mathematics, visual arts, music, and other subjects have claimed that unique aspects of their disciplines involve distinctive mental skills, requiring specially tailored strategies for learning.

While some subject-specific thinking skills undoubtedly exist, it is also clear that numerous cognitive skills cut across several school subjects. In both history and literature, students must be able to infer motivation, understand sequences, and trace cause/effect relationships. Skill in estimation, measurement, and visual imagery are essential to woodworking and geometry alike. All subjects involve definitions that in turn include classification and specification, comparison and contrast. No discipline can claim exemption from many of the mental processes that the advocates of isolated instruction in thinking skills see as generic.

Thinking Skills in the English Language Arts

The English language arts, pre-K through college, inherently involve a wide range of essential thinking skills because of the close relationships between thinking and language as established by Piaget, Vygotsky, Luria, and others. Additionally, many aspects of reading and writing are pertinent to important thinking skills, as evidenced by the 1981 National Assessment of Educational Progress Report on Reading, Thinking, and Writing. Student writing samples were found to be lacking in the cognitive superstructures that inform clear writing--for example, organization of ideas, continuity, and cohesion.

Numerous theorists, researchers, and practitioners have linked generic thinking skills with subject matter traditionally associated with English and language arts instruction. Moffett and Wagner's (1983) K-13 program is perhaps the most expansive of the cognitive-based language arts curricula. Hays and others (1983) have explored writing as a mode of thinking. Relationships between class discussion and thinking have been articulated by Stanford and Roark (1974) and Staton (1984). Pearson and Tierney (1984) are among those who see reading as an active mental process involving the construction of meaning. The NCTE "Essentials of English" statement holds that teaching of creative, logical, and critical thinking is close to the core of effective English instruction.

English teachers have a special role in the teaching of thinking skills, precisely because of what Ernest Boyer (1983) calls "the centrality of language" in the curriculum. But of course, this role does not imply that language and thinking are the exclusive domain of English teachers. A broader conceptualization is needed--one that places language in perspective with both the subject-specific and the generic thinking skills involved in other disciplines.

Language and Thinking across the Curriculum

The pervasiveness of language in the teaching of all subjects and the close ties of oral and written language to thinking suggest that language across the curriculum is a primary concept in developing all thinking skills. John Carroll (1974) stated that "the various forms of pictorial expression are almost always accompanied by language and often require language to make them intelligible." Piaget (1971) has written that "language is but one among . . . many aspects of the semiotic function, even though it is in most instances the most important." Umberto Eco (1972) agrees that language is "the most powerful semiotic device that man has invented." Certainly language is used by musicians and visual artists in articulating their intentions and describing their techniques. And critical analysis of the elements in any nonlinguistic work involves language, as does description of the responses that the work invokes in us. Even highly abstract visualization processes in mathematics and intuitive psychomotor activites in athletics are, to some extent, mediated by language in school settings.

The student who is articulate in oral and written language has an indispensable tool for all school learning, because the ability to give shape to thought through language is a necessary (though not of course sufficient) skill in every subject. Christopher Thaiss (1984) points to "the inseparableness of language, thinking, and learning. If we do not apply the full range of language resources to our learning of any subject, then we stifle thought, conscious and unconscious, and so deprive ourselves of more than the most superficial understanding."

Note that Thaiss is not calling for teachers of other subjects to assume the English teacher's responsibility for teaching sentence structure, standard English usage, or compositional form and style. Rather, language across the curriculum means *verbalization as the fulfillment of understanding within each subject area*. A close look at good writing across the curriculum materials (e.g, *Live Wire*; Tchudi et al., 1983) supports this notion. The writing assignments call for exercise of students' generic thinking processes and those pertinent to the subject area. Oral and written "prewriting" activities serve as mental organizers, leading towards a coherent writing product that demonstrates deep understanding of the subject.

Finally, simple introspection provides a common-sense verification of the idea that skill in language is closely related to significant learning. In dealing with new and difficult content, from intricacies of grammar to computer programming, each of us tends to go through an initial "grasping" in which we understand key concepts but cannot converse fluently, much less write cogently, about them. As our exposure to the material increases, we are able to shape our comprehension through questions, tentative verbalizations, informal talk with others, reorganization of notes, and so forth. Through language, then, we gradually mold nascent insights into more cohesive forms. We not only *recognize* the structure of the subject (as one does in merely taking an objective test) but also verbally manipulate its ideas, *expressing* its orderliness in personalized and unique ways.

Language as a way of thinking and learning, then, is not merely a pedagogical catchphrase. It is an essential element in every classroom and the most persuasive way of insuring that thinking skills are, in fact, being taught effectively in every subject area.

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READING AND THE UNWRITTEN TEXT

Leroy Perkins

Recent research and informed opinion agree that developing reading and writing skills at any level in the language arts curriculum is best accomplished by acknowledging the complex, close connections that reading and writing share (Sanacore 717, Tromky and Wood 37). In a recent edition of Education Week, Paul Connolly (Director of the Institute for Writing and Thinking at Bard College) states that ". . .learning occurs only when students are creating meaning for themselves" (Olson 54). This sounds innocuous enough at first glance, but upon reflection it emerges as a radical statement, though Connolly's equation of learning and the creation of meaning is obviously congruent with the concert of language arts educators' findings that both reading and writing are creative learning activities, or at least ought to be. Tierney and Pearson provide a daring corollary to Connolly's statement by taking the position that ". . .readers compose meaning (there is no meaning on the page until a reader decides there is)" (569).

As I understand Tierney and Pearson, reading comprehension happens like the tree that falls in the forest: if nobody's there to hear it, the event hasn't occurred. There is no meaning to a text without a reader to "compose" its meaning. By itself the text is only potentially meaningful. The text without a reader is like a seed waiting for germination. Tierney and Pearson take the position that "Meaning is created" (my italics) as the reader combines "his background of experience with the author's cues to come to grips both with what the writer is getting him to do or think and what the reader decides and creates for himself" (568).

Beyond acknowledging that both reading and writing are composing activities, I'm reminded of Norman Holland's notion of "personal style" in reading and its potential application to writing. From Holland's psychoanalytic perspective, readers "rehearse their own psychological make-up irrespective of the texts they are reading" (Five Readers Reading gtd. in Benton 272). Holland's observation derives from his noticing ". . .the sameness one reader brings to different stories and the differences different readers bring to the same story" (gtd. in Benton 272).

I recently experienced what I believe is a practical--though quite unscientific--verification of Holland's thesis. While preparing a course proposal for a popular literature course (traditionally stocked with science fiction, western and detective titles), I decided to take the high road and design a poetry course on the topic "The Ineffable." I hoped to trace instances in which poets have come to the threshold of that which cannot be said but can be merely indicated. While wondering what might be a suitable anthology for the course, I realized that almost any

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broadly based selection would do, as long as it hadn't been edited with anybody's else thematic bias in mind. I would provide the bias, that is, find what I wanted all by myself. It was easy to cull a kind of mini-anthology of poems from a "nothing-special" larger anthology, thus fashioning an edited text that would address my topic, that which is beyond words. This edited text then became the course syllabus. The course was not approved. My chairman wisely suggested that "The Ineffable" might be more appropriate for a graduate seminar than for a popular literature course.

But the point I wish to make is that I remain convinced (on the basis of this and similar experiences) that I and any other teacher who takes the time can pull pretty much whatever we want out of most anthologies, because in all my reading (whether it's in poetry anthologies or not) I have expectations of finding what I'm looking for, and I usually *do*. This doubtless says more about my proclivity to twist texts to serve my personal ends than it does about the unedited texts themselves.

If my contention that we can generally find what we want to find in literature holds true, and at the risk of reviving a hackneyed metaphor, could it be that literature is a mirror, for both ourselves and our students? Accept for a moment the premise that our responses to a text reflect our literary and non-literary backgrounds (call them "life experiences"). Then we readers create a private text that reflects who we have been, who we are, and perhaps who we shall be. It follows that because each reader brings a different set of life experiences to the text, each reader will respond to the text differently. I see, you see, he she it sees, to paraphrase Melville, and all of us "see" the same text differently. This familiar bit of reader response theory is worth repeating, not only for its implications for writing, which I will take up below, but also because it reminds us of how selectively we acknowledge what's on the page in front of us.

What we and our students learn from reading depends on which of our sensory-intellectual buttons a text pushes, and that in turn depends not only upon the author's designs on his audience, but also on the reader's predisposition to find what he or she is looking for in the first place. Hence my confidence that I can turn almost any anthology of poetry into pretty much anything I want. And so can you.

From this perspective, reading reminds one of Heisenberg's crucial insight for experiments in high energy physics: the observer is also a participant, and physicists as well as other scientists tend to find what they are looking for in the same way that English teachers discover what they want in anthologies, simply because they *want* to find what they are looking for. Thus I see reading as somewhat like a scientific experiment in that we readers won't know what's between the covers of a book until we look, but we approach texts with certain sets of expectations, certain buttons waiting to be pushed. It should not surprise us that we generally find what we seek in what we read. There are some disappointments, to be sure-- we may find more than we seek, for example, in the same way that physicists have found a by now embarrassingly populated "particle zoo" in their atom smashing search for elementary particles.

I believe we readers routinely and successfully edit texts to gratify our hope that the texts will give us what we want. When we or our students underline portions of a literary text, what we are doing is creating a personal version of the text that conforms to our desires, whether conscious or unconscious. Again, what we want depends on who we are, how we have lived. It follows that there is no common text (no two people want exactly the same things from a text because of different backgrounds), but there is a common context--literally "with the text"--that we may call "life." It is "life" that provides a context, that enables us to recognize versions of ourselves and our life experiences in the mirror of literature.

When I say that readers come to the public text with certain expectations, I might as well have said that we are looking for texts in our reading that correspond with the private texts that already exist in our minds, based on who we are, that is, on our life experiences. In fact, one way of thinking about the mind is to call it the unwritten text, the text that we discover in the literature we read, or that we shape when we write.

I have said that in reading we look for what we want. In writing, however, we don't yet have a palpable text to gratify our desires, to give us what we want, and so we scan our dreams, interior monologues, memories, friends' conversations and other already inscribed texts to provide a context for our text, the text waiting to be written in our minds. I am struck by Marilyn Boutwell's comment on Marta, an eight-year-old third grader, who not only became "a reader of her own writing" but also "a writer of her own reading" (725). This sounds much like Sanacore's conclusion that the "'putting together' of meaning as individuals read is similar to the 'putting together' of thoughts as they write" (717).

So what's the difference between reading and writing? If we can see both what we write and what we read as mirrors we look into to see ourselves, then we may say that we live vicariously in our writing as well as in our reading. An important difference is that in writing we are denied the convenience of an as yet raw or unedited text (again, reading is editing, since we see what we want to see) and therefore to write we must edit the text that does not yet exist on paper, the text that lies dormant in our minds. Janet Emig's distinction between reading and writing is useful here: "Writing is originating and creating a unique verbal construct that is graphically recorded. Reading is creating or re-creating but not originating a verbal construct that is graphically recorded" (123).

In Jungian terms, when we read, the archetypal pattern or myth is given to us as received knowledge from the writer's collective unconscious. In writing, however, we must "originate" or re-ceremonialize reality for ourselves, must become the shaman and report our own dreams, our participation in the world soul.

On less speculative ground, we can agree with Graves and Murray that "writing is the making of reading" (48) and go on to observe that the act of writing is like discovering the text that is already in the writer's mind, though it is not on paper until he or she puts it there. Writing is the process of transcribing a portion of the writer's mind into print, bringing the as yet unwritten but potential text to fruition. Similarly, reading for meaning is to discover, to edit, to compose a portion of the reader's mind that is already splashed across the page.

The extent to which the writer can literally incorporate the as yet unwritten text into the actualized text he inscribes is what we might call writing with comprehension, that is, writing with meaning, composing. In generating meaning the writer produces a text, that which waits in the mind to be comprehended by the writer and then is comprehended in the act of writing and may be comprehended by the reader/editor who comes to the text prepared to see what he or she wants to find.

The generation of meaning (or comprehension--they are the same) occurs in both reading and writing activies, but in writing, the language in our minds waits to be transcribed, waits to be recorded. One definition of reading then is to call it the process of discovering our private text in public property. By the same reasoning, we may define writing as the process of making the private text public.

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TECHNIQUES TO TEACH AUDIENCE AWARENESS

Kathleen S. Maddox

Most of us who are involved in the teaching of writing, as well as those who study the writing process, recognize the fact that most students do not consider their audience when they write; that is, these writers do not consider their reader's point of view or that reader's possible reaction to the stance that the writer takes. Students are unable to recongize their audience largely because they are still centered in their own frame of reference, one in which they believe that everyone thinks the way that they do. Because students write within this limited framework, they do not see the need to explain or defend themselves or their ideas. If we, as teachers, expect students to move out of their own frame of reference and into another's, we must emphasize an awareness of audience to them and help them develop methods to address that audience. In learning to write for a reader, students will find that many of the problems they have with writing will diminish. That is, they will begin to recognize that the reason for stating a clear thesis, for developing ideas, and for organizing and focusing those ideas is to communicate with the reader. This ability to consider another's point of view is important, then, because it leads students toward effective discourse. Additionally, in developing this ability to step out of their own frame of reference and into another's, students also advance in their cognitive development, an advance that makes them more mature thinkers and writers than they were in the past.

In order to teach students to move out of their own frame of reference and into another's, we must emphasize audience considerations throughout the writing course. That is, we should teach audience as an integral part of the writing process, not as a separate entity, often tacked on to the writing assignment as an afterthought: "And don't forget your reader." We can maintain a focus on the reader by explaining to students that writing is an act of communication, written to be read by someone. We can explain that in order to communicate, the writer must make herself understood by the reader. We can question students continually as to the effectiveness of their discourse for the reader: Has the student conveyed her meaning to the reader? Has communication occurred?

Instead of teaching composition as a subject in itself, with its own set of rules, the teacher can explain all the components of writing in terms of communication with the reader: the student needs to write a clear thesis statement so that the reader will know what the main point of the paper is; the student needs to develop and clarify ideas through illustration and example because the reader may not understand a generalization and needs examples and illustrations for clarity; the student must use correct syntactical structures so that the reader understands the

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meaning of a sentence and so that it can be read easily; the student should use subordination and coordination so that the reader sees the logical relationship between ideas; the student should use correct pronoun reference so that the reader knows to whom the pronoun refers; the student should structure the entire discourse so that the reader can see the relationship between ideas; the student should use correct and concise words to avoid confusion on the part of the reader. Even spelling can be viewed in terms of the reader because if words are mispelled, they may be miconstrued by the reader, and the writer may lose credibility. In short, the teacher can relate every aspect of the writing process, from spelling to organizing the entire discourse, to purpose in terms of audience. At its most fundamental level, that purpose is to convey meaning to the reader.

In addition to emphasizing this communicative aspect in writing, the teacher can ask the student to complete the following steps as part of each writing assignment:

1. Choose a specific audience and do a heuristic about that audience before the first draft of the paper.

> The following heuristic, which I have simplified somewhat for freshmen, is a model presented by Pfister and Petrick ("A Heuristic Model for Creating a Writer's Audience," CCC, May 1980, 214).[1] Since the student may have difficulty understanding what the heuristic calls for and may have trouble applying the material she generates from it to the writing itself, the teacher should go over this model, as well as the other models discussed below, before sending the student off to work on her own.

A HEURISTIC MODEL FOR AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

The Characteristics of the Audience	What is her/his physical, social, and economic status? (age, income class, etc.)
Audience/Itself	What does s/he read? What does s/he watch on T.V.? What does this reader value most? least? (home, family, job, money, social acceptance) What are her/his common beliefs and prejudices?

The Subject as Viewed by the Audience Audience/Subject	How much does the reader know about my subject? What is the opinion of the reader about my subject? How willing will s/he be to change that opinion? How willing will s/he be to act on his/her own opinion? Why does s/he hold these opinions?
The Relationship of the Audience and the Writer Audience/Writer	What does the reader feel or know about me? What are our common interests, values, attitudes? What is my purpose in addressing this audience? What role do I want the audience to play? (parent, taxpayer, business person) What role will I play? (taxpayer, parent, business person, superior, equal)
Methods to Achieve Communication Audience/Form	What points will I need to consider for this audience? How difficult should my sentence structure and word use be?

2. Write a complete purpose or goal statement, defining purpose in terms of the reader.

> This procedure helps the student to integrate the subject matter with the audience, and to develop strategies for accommodating her audience, while clarifying for the writer herself just what her purpose is. The statement should include what the writer intends to accomplish with the paper, what effect she plans the paper to have on her reader, and what strategies she will implement to achieve her purpose. The following is one example of a purpose statement for a paper directed to prospective parents on home birth:
>
> > In this paper, I want to present the option of home birth to prospective parents, who may resist the idea because of the risks involved, and because they believe that the hospital provides the necessary facilities and staff for a safe delivery. These parents also may not have considered home birth as an alternative to hospital birth. In presenting parents with information on home birth, I will concede that there are instances when a baby should not be born at home and that any parent who is not 100% sure of the safety of

home birth should not consider it as an option. I will then go on to present the objections of most doctors to home birth and refute those objections. Then, I will present the benefits of having a child at home: 1) the hospitals don't provide an atmosphere for a positive birth, and often the mother and newborn don't receive as much care and attention as they would at home; in addition, some of the methods used in the hospital can be detrimental to both mother and child; 2) the home birth experience is a safe and rewarding alternative to hospital birth, providing a loving and natural atmosphere for the newborn, the parents, and siblings. I will support my argument with facts, statements from doctors, and with personal examples. Since I do not want to alienate my audience, I will avoid any harsh criticism of doctors, or any reference to home birth as a religious or spiritual experience as has often been done in the past by writers on this topic. I want to present myself as reasonable and home birth as an option to those who want an alternative to hospital birth.

3. After completion of the first draft, do a self-assessment of that draft.

This assessment can be particularly difficult for the student because it asks her to step out of her role as writer--her own frame of reference--and into the reader's role, and to analyze the paper's effectiveness for gaps that need clarification for that intended reader. Appendix 1 is a self-assessment developed by Janice Hays, Director of Composition at the University of Colorado, for composition classes. The assessment is based on the work of Kenneth Bruffee (A Short Course in Writing, Cambridge, Mass: Winston, 1980) and Richard Beach ("The Pragmatics of Self-assessing," in Revising, New Essays for Teachers of Writing, ed. Ronald A. Sudol, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1975).

4. Critique one another's papers, taking on the role of a specified reader.

If the assignment calls for the student to write to her classmates, student readers can respond to the paper from their own frames of reference, telling the writer what they don't understand about the paper. If the writer is writing for a audience other than her classmates, the student reader will have to critique the paper from a frame of reference other than her own. This critiquing becomes an exercise in role-playing for the student reader, forcing her to take on the attributes of the intended reader, which will in turn help her with her own papers. Appendix 2 is a sample critiquing form, again developed by Janice Hays:

5. Write the second draft, revising for audience.

Based on the writer's own self-assessment, the peer critiquing, and the instructor's feedback, the student should do a revision.

In addition to having the student go through these five steps for audience, the teacher can sequence assignments as James Moffett suggests in Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), so that the writer moves to an increasingly abstract or remote audience. Susan Miller says in "Rhetorical Maturity: Definition and Development" (in Reinventing the Rhetorical Tradition, eds. Aviva Freedman and Ian Pringle, Conway, Arkansas: L&S Books, 1980, 124) that the student moves through stages in learning to write for a distant audience. She states:

> The movement from ego-centric, to explanatory, to persuasive discourse is indeed a movement from the writer's assumption of union with an audience to the writer's recognition of another as an audience, and finally to the writer's analysis of a distant, unfamiliar, universalized series of values as an audience.

It therefore makes sense to take these writers step by step to a remote audience, starting by having them write for themselves, then to peers, colleagues, known specific audiences, known general audiences, and finally to unknown audiences.

The following outline suggests a possible sequence of assignments for moving the students to increasingly abstract audiences:

A. Writing for the self

    -journals
    -freewriting
    (these assignments can be used by the student to generate material for future papers to audiences other than themselves.)

B. Writing for classmates

    -pair students to write character sketches of one another, and have them evaluate each other's sketches for accuracy.

    -put students into groups of three or four and have them write their papers to these peers, using the five steps previously mentioned.

C. Writing for the teacher

-have the class do a heuristic, analyzing the teacher (you) using a hypothetical topic. (Since much of what the student is required to write in college is, in fact, directed solely to the teacher, students will find this exercise especially applicable to the writing that they do in college.)

D. Writing for the school paper

-conduct a class discussion of these readers.

-have the students do the five step procedure previously mentioned.

-have them send the finished draft to the paper's editor.

E. Writing for the local newspaper

-follow the steps in D above.

F. Writing for a popular magazine

-examine the ads, the ratio of print to pictures, the level of readability in the prose, and the general format for indications of audience.

-have the students do the five step procedure.

-have them send the finished draft to the appropriate magazine.

G. Writing to persuade

-have the students write on one side of a controversial issue.

-ask the students for the next assignment to take the opposite side of the same question and argue it for a specific audience.

-spend a class session or more discussing Rogerian Rhetoric.[2]

As has probably become obvious from this discussion, the emphasis of the entire writing curriculum centers around what Moffett in Teaching the Universe of Discourse calls writing "about something for someone." Yet this emphasis does not exclude other important elements in writing but rather incorporates them, giving the student a reason for everything she does while writing, from spelling correctly to structuring effectively. This kind of emphasis on audience is just what students need to move them toward effective thinking and writing.

Notes

[1] For other examples of heuristics analyzing audience see Alton Becker, Kenneth Pike, and Richard Young, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), pp. 178-80; Maxine Hariston, *A Contemporary Rhetoric* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978); Janice Lauer, Gene Mantague, Andrea Lundsford, and Janet Emig, *Four Worlds of Writing* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

[2] "Rogerian Rhetoric" calls for the writer to write to the audience without threatening or challenging its basic values and without forcing the reader into taking an unswerving stand by making value judgements. It also asks the writer to set up an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding and to come up with reasonable solutions that both parties can live with. For a more detailed account see Maxine Hairston, "Carl Rogers's Alternative to Traditional Rhetoric," *CCC*, December 1976, pp. 373-377; Carl R. Rogers, "Communication: Its Blocking and Facilitation," paper presented at Northwestern University's Conference on Communication, October 11, 1951.

CALL FOR PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association

The third annual conference of the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association will be hosted by Boise State University on June 15, 1985. The conference, though mainly for writing center directors and tutors, also attracts a general audience of educators interested in the teaching of writing, both in college and in high school. The principal speaker will be Donald M. Murray of the University of New Hampshire, author of *Write to Learn* and *A Writer Teaches Writing.*

The conference schedule will allow for both 20-minute and one-hour sessions. Informal talks and demonstrations are preferred, but proposals for papers are also welcome. Suggested topics include: tutoring methods; tutor training; ways to get a writing center started; ways to make a writing center survive (and thrive); and the role of the writing center in the English department, the school, and the community.

When submitting a proposal, please include: (1) name, position, and institution; (2) title of presentation; (3) a one-paragraph description, including purpose, method of presenting the material, and content. Send proposals and inquiries to Richard Leahy, RMWCA Conference Chair, English Department, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho 83725. Deadline for proposals is April 1, 1985.

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Appendix 1

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

NAME: ______________________

PAPER: ______________________ DATE: ______________________

After you have written the first version of your paper, reread it as if you were a stranger seeing it for the first time. Try to respond to it as if it were not your paper, and try to see what the paper actually *says* as opposed to what you thought it said or what you meant it to say as you were writing. Note any places where what you said in the paper does not quite correspond to what you meant to say. Also look for places that are not clear, complete, or persuasive and places in which the writer (you!) seems to have "discovered" something in the actual writing, something that now needs to be fully incorporated into the paper. This last kind of spot is especially important, for often some of our best insights and ideas come to us as we are actually writing, and we want to be sure that we do justice to them. Don't forget also to notice places in the paper that are especially effective. When you have finished filling out this form, staple it or paper clip it to the top of your paper.

A. After you have given the paper a thoughtful reading, perhaps scribbling some notes in the margins, answer the following questions:

1) Who is (are) your reader(s) for this paper?
2) What do you like best about your paper?
3) What is your goal or purpose in this paper? That is, what do you want to say or show to your reader?
4) What do you want your reader to think or do as a result of reading this paper?

B. Do the following about each of the paper's paragraphs. If you have not as yet divided the paper into paragraphs, mark off its sections with slash marks (//) and answer the questions for each section you have marked:

1) Summarize what you said in the paragraph. (Write one sentence.)
2) What did you want this paragraph to do or to accomplish in terms of the paper as a whole? Or what did you want your reader to think or feel as s/he read this paragraph?
3) List any problems or questions that you have about this paragraph or any further information that it ought to state in order to accomplish the purpose that you listed under 2). Note any places where you got confused. Note any places where you discovered ideas that warrant further development. You should have a comment about each paragraph. Use the back of the paper and a second sheet if necessary.

Appendix 2

READER'S ASSESSMENT FORM

WRITER'S NAME: _______________ YOUR NAME: ______________________

PAPER: ________________________ DATE: ___________________________

Read the paper carefully. Especially look for places where the writer seems to have "discovered" something in the actual writing that needs further developing in the paper. Look for the things that you like about the paper. Also note places where you need more information or where you became confused. Then do the following:

1) What do you think the paper's goal is? That is, what does the paper say or show to you?

2) As a result of reading the paper, what do you think or what might you do about the subject that the paper discusses?

3) What do you like best about the paper? Be very specific.

Do the following for each of the paper's paragraphs or section (if the writer has not divided the paper into paragraphs, or has not made a sufficient number of paragraph divisions, use slash marks (//) to indicate sections):

1) Summarize what each paragraph says. (Write 1 complete sentence.)

2) Describe what each paragraph does or accomplishes in terms of the paper as a whole. (Write one sentence.)

3) Indicate what you thought or how you felt as you read this paragraph. (Write one sentence.)

4) List any problems or questions that you have about the paragraph or any further information that you need for the paragraph to be effective. Note any places where you got confused. Note any places where the writer seems to have discovered or partially discovered ideas that warrant further development. You should have a summary sentence and a comment about each paragraph. Use the back of this paper if necessary.

WHO'S READING WHOM?: AN AUDIENCE ANALYSIS PRIMER

Jeff Schiff

From Day One each semester I have been faced with the same interested stares in my freshman writing classes as I set out to try to make clear my notions regarding audience analysis. A writer's audience cannot be of use unless it is specifically detailed, I harp--echoing much of current audience analysis theory--with attention paid to both the writer's intention and reader expectation. A writer must, in effect, conjure an audience, project it, and then actively attempt to construct it, limb by metaphoric limb. There is no use in considering the universal, I continue, for we do not live shoulder to shoulder with generic man/woman, but with an endless number of idiosyncratic receptors. Trying to target an audience-at-large is like trying to target a single, two-foot, three inch rainbow trout at pond's edge that you thought you saw ten years ago one clear night: only voodoo can bring the thing off every time. A writer must know who she's petitioning or informing well ahead of the petition itself. Audience exploration before any other--nothing is more obvious or crucial. Such was my battle charge, such often my fatal, bellicose cry.

For my students, goal-oriented, grade-conscious swashbucklers that they seem to be, it becomes predictably hilarious to listen to their instructor chortle: "commandment #1, know thy audience." For if in their high-school-brewed incipiency they are sure of any one thing about survival strategies, they know their audience--me. I am it. I stir their invention, exploration, or revision when they bog in novitiate muds; I am, pardon the obvious, party to their night-after, morning-lazy, and hangover-induced antagonisms. Simply, I grade their work. Whatever is said to the adamantly and liberally conceived contrary, I am both their individual and collective reader. And it would be requiring a suspension of disbelief of truly aggravated and debilitating proportion to insist otherwise. Even though the text they are using suggests assignments of a highly contextualized nature, and even though we will engage in dummy-readership, peer-review, and the like, I am the master of assessment and evaluation. Therefore, the plan seems quite clear: in a world of writers attempting to satisfy the needs of an audience, a semester-long syllabus in writing at the freshman level had to be designed with audience analysis as its prime concern.

Therefore, no longer do I insist as do so many of the wisest texts and curriculums that my students write letters to unknown and fictionally replete beings, essays for distant, unlikely readers, movie/book reviews for "general" audiences. In my freshman classes, I make no bones about it. To paraphrase and brutalize Whitman, I am their man, I have been there, and I am willing to suffer. Rather than trying to peddle myself as a secondary and hence peripheral audience to a group of incoming and suspicious

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students, at best unused to the idea of teacher merely as facilitator, I unabashedly make myself the primary, targeted audience.

Yet I do not insist the students go about such writing blindly, thinking that they may write to any unknown figure of authority looming before them. It would be as ineffectual and as purely academic for them to eschew all audience evaluation as it would be to pretend that through great deliberative and conjectural calisthenics they could come to terms with an unfamiliar, real-world audience by disregarding their teacher/evaluator. In my classes, the first duty in audience analysis and hence in the composing process is to construct the teacher--attend the actual. In short, I start from the earliest square: fiat #1, indeed, know thy audience; question #1, who is this joker about to assess my work?

Of course this type of operation may require an unusual measure of honesty (or dramatic superiority) on the instructor's part, a willingness to be interviewed by a jumble of freshmen obviously itching to know everything from the girth of one's, er, wallet to which shortening one prefers for baking muffins. And for those of you unwilling to divulge personal information on the way to improving student writing, perhaps you should read no further. If you are like myself, however, eager to engage in at least preliminary, lay psychoanalysis, finanacial analysis, informal bull-sessions, and the like; if you are willing to get down into the student pit; the method I propose solidifies the writing context and hence the probability of audience awareness and ensuing operationalization. Once a student learns to ask the "right" questions about audience, she will find it that much simpler to integrate such findings within emerging texts. Then, and only then, the instructor-as-audience theory can be dispensed with--utterly and finally. Until students believe that audience truly matters, until they have viewed their findings at work, immediately so, they will only engage an assignment with as much libido as is necessary to complete that assignment--grade as goal.

Beyond improved audience control, the student also becomes aware of an unlimited number of inquiry strategies. On the road to discovering who the instructor is and what should be written on her way, the student encounters non-data-restricted exploratory models applicable at all stages of the composing process. In short, the student learns heuristic procedures a natural way, with constant and informative feedback all along the route. If executed correctly, this audience analysis operation is as much a guide to invention as it is an audience heuristic alone; by determining audience predilections, it stirs and directs composing from step one. It is obviously, as well, a guide to specificity, concretion, emotional, logical, and ethical appeals, diction, form, et cetera. Short of having the students write across the curriculum during their first year in college (and thereby confronting many different and real audiences), this is the best way I have found of making written communication valid for the student.

The Audience Journal

As part of the varied class requirements, I have my students keep an audience journal. Not unlike the traditional record book so much in vogue in the seventies, the audience version has at its core the continual opinion changes, solidifications, pronouncements, fanciful meanderings, and questions so central to not only our writing, but to our very being. Unlike the customary log, which is deliciously open to unlimited and often purposeful variegation, this journal is specifically aimed at taking material and psychic accountancy of projected readership. Only those matters related to who any piece of writing is geared towards or how such will be executed may be entered here.

Along with the usual supplies demanded on the first day of class, I demand that students purchase a hardcover, laboratory notebook (lined, not graphed). I prefer the hardcover version, as the students are all familiar (or soon will be) with this type of book from their chemistry, biology, or physics lab sections; will, in turn, appreciate the exploratory nature of the record; and will be less apt to shear pages from its gathering wool. As a metaphor, too--no matter how facile the notion--"hardcover" means "worth keeping." That is what I aim for, of course: a worthwhile record of audience perspectives.

Next, I ask that the book be labelled and restricted to audience concerns. I do not ordinarily assign other kinds of journals to these classes, as I want their full attention paid here. Afterwards, to facilitate early entries, I assign a diagnostic in the guise of a first journal assignment. By using a diagnostic question directly linked to audience analysis, the students begin to comprehend the primacy of such a task:

> Who am I writing for in this class, and how will ___________ influence my writing?

When I am through making customary placement evaluations, I return the journals and workshop the "answers" and introduce the different senses of "audience" in the air today.

It has been my experience that a bit of theoretical background assuages my students' fears and lets them know that I am not some radical talkshow host hipdeep in experimental pedagogy let loose on an unsuspecting freshman class. Students take comfort in the fact that there is at least a theoretical basis for my plans and for audience evaluation itself. Lately, I have been using the critical distinctions of Barry M. Kroll's "Writing for Readers: Three Perspectives on Audience."[1] At other times, I have toyed with Walter Ong's work and the work of many others as well--though this summary seems to play best in the freshman arena.

According to Kroll, the three views of audience analysis are the rhetorical, the informational, and the social. The rhetorical stems from the classical rhetoric of Aristotle and Plato, in which there is a need to evaluate audience on the basis of human characteristics; matters such as level of education, political affiliation, job station, and religious beliefs figure highly in deciding what one writes and how, in the end, one arranges and styles it. This line of conjecture proves of little difficulty, for it is not very far from a purely common-sense approach to audience, mostly a question of listing attributes, psychic and somatic.

The informational perspective proves a bit more tricky. Taken from the work of E.D. Hirsch Jr., it centers around the workings of long and short term memory. Its central concerns, according to Kroll, are the omission of needless words and the bundling of related words. While many of the students are well-versed in the notion of writing as informational exchange, they are not nearly as familiar with the mechanics, semantics, syntactics, or logic necessary to facilitate the transfer. They do follow, however, that this perspective is a matter of author intentionality. I term it: the "I-have-to-make-my-point;-what-is-the-most-effective,-economical-way -of-doing-so? theory."

The final perspective is the most perilous to broach, as it is closest to home and requires the most personal reckoning; for the social perspective argues that a writer is at first ego-centered and once matured moves from a concern with the self-only to more dialectal concerns. In other words, and this to be sure a distillation and dilution of Piaget (and later Flower and Hayes), writers move from writing for the "other" locked within themselves to writing for actual others, from assuming that the world of their psyches is transparent--in all precious, precise, and reverberative detail--to knowing that what they know, individually, is quite idiosyncratic and naturally requires explanation and elaboration. They learn that they do not so much have an odd, polish-needy dialect as they do a confusingly original, psychic idiolect. Willingness to accept the libidinal presence of others is to nurture and, finally, compose rounded, worthwhile, and understandable discourse, and to move from writer- to reader-based prose.

After I have piqued their interests in this manner, I move on to the matter of integrating the theory with the journal itself. As I describe it, the record book will allow the students to determine their own perspective(s) on audience--mostly rhetorical, stoically informational, hesitantly social, or any ratio calcuable. Of course at this juncture they may have only begun to afford these theories any youthful energy; still, they have been made aware of the complexity of the composing process and have been awarded responsibility far beyond what they imagined in their "how I spent my summer vacation" nightmares. And this "responsibility award" seems to stand as the cornerstone of efficacious discoursing. The student must know that she is in control. And how does she know this? Well, by seeing results in audience reaction.

Based on the theory they have chosen, I next ask that each student use the journal to prepare a list of thirty questions she will use for her practical audience analysis. We then air these lists in class. Generally, students come to realize quite quickly that all audience-related questions are not valid at all times: an inquiry letter to an instructor regarding grading procedures, for instance, would require less knowledge about mean income than would a persuasive letter to a prospective business associate. But, more importantly, students begin to come to grips with other central issues: suppose that *I do know* the mean income of a prospective partner, suppose I know her educational background, her likes and dislikes, how will this aid me in composing? To what end will I allow my understanding of an audience's disposition to determine my own writing? Put another way, it is one thing to assemble a list of valid, audience-related questions; it is another to restrict this list to topically-valid questions, still quite another to knowingly manage answers to these questions within a text.

The next of the journal exercises, then, asks that students arrive at a topic--in this case truly an inquiry letter to the instructor regarding grading policies--and assemble a list of questions valid for this assignment alone. Again, once this is complete, we exchange answers in class. Is it necessary to know the instructor's family background? To know her marital status? Her political predilections? To some, indeed, this is important. To some who have begun asking many of the right questions, this information is essential. Not only do we workshop the questions in class, but also the reasons behind asking them. Then I begin answering questions directed toward me. Once students have gathered whatever information they deem important, I ask that they justify in the journals *why* it is important. This I call the bridge assignment.

Bridging

The transfer value of many attempts at audience analysis is often the weakest link in an already weak chain. Once students have at their disposal all of the "requisite" information about their readers, how do they reflect such in their writing. I don't think that we yet have a complete answer to that question. Still, there are ways to bridge the lacuna between demographics and word, style, and substance choice.

The bridge assignment, as I term it, requires the student to take audience analysis one step further than is customary, to ask, answer, and *use* audience information before draft stage. Given the inquiry letter regarding grading procedures, a student would, say, write the following:

> Since Jeff has taken three college degrees and has passed over many of the hurdles on the way, he will probably not think grades are worthless. He will be tough, perhaps, in a fair way--knowing he was once in the same situation.

Or:

> The instructor is not married; therefore, he will be more apt to go easy on female students, hoping to win their favor.

Or:

> The instructor is looking for a raise. Raises come of good student-evaluations; he will be a cinch.

Although students may be terribly wrong in their assessments, at least they have moved from mere lists to more elaborate cause-effect systems. What, after all, do statistical breakdowns about our audience tell us, but that we must think about their worth in relation to our compositions?

By the time students have completed the lists and bridge paragraphs, they are indeed ready for an in-depth exploration of their topic, based on audience considerations. They have made and are engaged in making informed decisions. They have developed an art of starting based on a rhetorical "target" and topic combined. They are not, then, later in the game and perhaps in an ad hoc fashion asked to perform an audience analysis (or worse: told merely to "think about your readers"). Rather, they are informed from the start: audience above all will dictate your working ways.

Evaluation

From the instructor's standpoint, this type of audience-dominated, writing pedagogy allows for more workable evaluation procedures as well. In the first place, it is simpler and far more believable at first to tell a student that you--the instructor, the targeted audience--did or did not "get" the writing than it is to say: no, I don't think your audience of peers, or editors at the Des Moines Journal and Courier, or general audience of instructors at-large would catch your drift. For at this jucture, how does a student know what makes for sound, audience considerations and operationalization? In the second place, it is not overly difficult to step back into the audience journal and determine why communication has failed--what was over or under-valued, what was mishandled. Evaluation would of course still have a subjective backbone, but at least one open to further and welcomed scrutiny. Furthermore, assessment can be based on rhetorical measures, and writing understood as communicative exchange between real entities--even in the classroom, even directed toward the instructor.

Certainly not the only method of validating real world writing experience, perhaps audience-dominated composition pedagogy begun at the freshman level would best lay the groundwork for writing in all disciplines across the curriculum. If the audience is truly a fiction, as Walter Ong says, shouldn't we spend our best energy teaching students to create that fiction; or if the audience is very real, indeed, shouldn't we spend time teaching students to find out how real? In either case, it seems a must to attend to the composing process with audience first in mind.

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[1] Barry M. Kroll, "Writing for Readers: Three Perspectives on Audience," College Composition and Communication, 35 (May, 1984), 172-185.

METACOMPREHENSION

Sally N. Standiford

Teachers make many instructional decisions based on their assessments of student comprehension. "Excellent" students, for example, are often given enrichment materials, so that they won't be bored while the teacher works with other students; "poor" students, on the other hand, are often given remedial materials to help them "catch up." Almost always, such decisions are based on what a student knows or doesn't know relative to the teacher's questions. Although assessment of a student's comprehension is necessary and important, it is not always sufficient. There is another dimension that teachers might consider: the student's metacomprehension, or awareness of his or her own understanding.

What is Metacomprehension?

Who of us has not had the experience of reading a book and becoming aware that we have not understood the content of the last few pages? At the point of that awareness, our metacomprehension was very high--we *knew* we hadn't processed anything we'd just read. On the other hand, while we were reading absentmindedly, our metacomprehension was very low--we had been unaware of our own level of understanding. Metacomprehension, then, is the awareness of and conscious control over one's own understanding or lack of it.

Regardless of whether or not students are "doing well" (by whatever grading scheme we use), they may or may not be aware of their own degree of understanding. Students with high metacomprehension are either those who know they understand when, in fact, they do, or those who know they do not understand when, in fact, they do not. Their awareness of their understanding accurately reflects their comprehension.

Students have inaccurate or low metacomprehension if they are uncertain, or if they are unaware, that they do or do not understand. Poor metacomprehension may be exhibited in different ways: there are students who are sure they just "blew" tests on which they subsequently get top scores, students who believe that they have the material "down pat" and perform poorly, and students who just haven't thought about their own state of understanding. When we put these comprehension/metacomprehension dimensions together, we can divide our students into four groups.

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Comprehension

high	low	
know and are aware that they know 1	do not know and realize they do not know 2	high
		Metacomprehension
3 know but think they don't know	4 do not know but think they do know	low

From Computers in the English Classroom: A Primer for Teachers. Sally N. Standiford, Kathleen Jaycox, and Anne Auten. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse of Reading and Communication Skills and National Council of Teachers of English, 1983, 17. ED 228 654

Why is Metacomprehension Important?

One of the primary goals of instruction is to help students become efficient and effective learners--to have them become responsible for their own learning. Effective learning requires awareness of one's understanding or lack of it, as well as knowing what to do when one fails to understand. Baker and Brown (ED 195 932) have identified three main reasons for comprehension failures: (1) the learner does not have enough information about the topic to interpret the message (written or oral); (2) the learner has the appropriate schemata, or prior knowledge, but there aren't enough clues in the message to suggest them to the learner; or (3) the learner interprets the message consistently, but the interpretation is different from the one intended by the author or speaker. It is very unlikely that students in the third group will take remedial action, since they won't realize that their comprehension has failed. Students who fail to construct consistent interpretations are more likely to attempt activities to clarify their understanding. "Such self-awareness is a prerequisite for self-regulation, the ability to orchestrate, monitor, and check one's own cognitive activities," according to Brown, Campione, and Day (ED 203 297, 26).

What Can English/Language Arts Teachers Do?

Asserting that sophisticated reading is a complex, acquired skill, Stewart and Tei (37) state that readers need to learn how to engage in certain activities to achieve the goals of reading. One such goal, for example, is reading to study. This may involve skills such as recognizing and retaining main points, rereading important sections, making adjustments in reading rate, and self-testing to monitor the success of various stategic activities. Awareness of the understanding and use of these skills is necessary to metacomprehension.

Schallert and Kleiman (ED 172 189) have identified some strategies reading teachers can use to help students' metacomprehension: (1) focusing the student's attention on the main ideas; (2) asking students questions about their understanding to help them monitor their comprehension; and (3) relating the student's relevant prior knowledge to the new information. As teachers we need to teach students how to use such activities and encourage their independent use.

For students with low comprehension-high metacomprehension (Cell 2 of grid), teacher questions and feedback designed to help students apply appropriate studying strategies and techniques can be effective. These students do not gain from those teacher responses that simply indicate that they are wrong--they already know that. As teachers better understand these strategies and techniques, they can train students to use them more effectively. For example, instructing students to summarize a reading without giving them any criteria for development of a summary does a disservice to those students who are aware that they don't know how to construct such a summary.

Students with high comprehension-low metacomprehension (Cell 3) need consistent, positive reinforcement, both verbal and written. Although some research has demonstrated that the positive reinforcement of confirming correctness for some students is ineffective, regular positive reinforcement is effective for this subset of students, since their lack of confidence is critical.

The approach for students with low comprehension-low metacomprehension (Cell 4) should be to focus on the metacomprehension dimension first, breaking through their false sense of understanding rather than teaching them content. One might ask these students questions that help them recognize a contradiction between what they really know and what they think they know, but don't. For example, a student who draws an illogical inference from a reading passage due to incomplete background knowledge may be unconvinced if simply told that he or she is wrong. Such a student could be confronted with his or her misunderstanding by being shown similarities and/or differences between the passage in question and analogous material more familiar to the student.

How Can Teachers Evaluate Student Metacomprehension?

One of the simplest ways to assess a student's awareness of understanding is to ask the student to rate the certainty that he or she has answered correctly or incorrectly. Students with good metacomprehension will respond that they are relatively certain that their correct answers are correct or that their incorrect answers are incorrect. Poor metacomprehenders will have a mismatch between their answers and their confidence ratings. A word of caution: younger students frequently respond positively when questioned on how sure they are of what they know, regardless of the truth of their assertions (Baker and Brown 1980). More direct evidence of metacomprehension for these students might come from monitoring the self-correction of their errors during such learning activities as reading.

"The ability to reflect on one's own activities. . . is a late developing skill with important implications. . . . If . . . the child is not aware of his own limitations as a learner or the complexity of the task at hand, then he can hardly be expected to take preventive actions in order to anticipate or recover from problems" (Baker and Brown ED 195 932, 3). It is not enough for a teacher to be aware of the dimension of comprehension awareness. Development of the student's own awareness is crucial. To better serve their students, English language arts teachers should regularly and actively integrate metacomprehension strategies in their classrooms.

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INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS IN POPULAR MAGAZINES

Caroline Goforth and Don Latham

Most writers agree that two of the hardest tasks in composition are starting and stopping. Introductions and conclusions pose especially difficult problems for inexperienced writers. Yet the psychological phenomenon of peripherality[1] suggests that what writers say first and last is most important because readers remember this material most clearly (Eden and Mitchell). Oddly enough, despite the difficulties and the importance of introductions and conclusions, these sections of the essay have interested few researchers and have received only cursory treatment in most composition textbooks.

Our desire to find a practical, effective pedagogical approach to introductions and conclusions led to the study reported here. Specifically, we wanted to find out how the introductions and conclusions of professional writers work, how these sections of the essay relate to each other, and how they affect the essay as an organic whole. We decided to examine expository articles in popular magazines for two reasons. First, the professional writers published there have proved the efficiency of their techniques by measuring up to standards of the literate community. Second, the articles represent the kind of analytical writing taught in most freshman composition courses. Our corpus includes twenty-four articles, eight each from *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, and *Saturday Review*. We randomly chose one article each from the January, April, July, and October issues of 1978 and 1979.

Our analysis of these articles resulted in two major findings. First, though textbooks generally define introductions and conclusions as single paragraphs developed by single rhetorical devices, we found introductory and concluding sequences of paragraphs, often developed by a combination of devices. Second, we observed that introductions and conclusions work as a unit to help structure the essay. They are tied together by the thesis and by the use of related phrases that appear in both sequences.

Writers of the articles used this flexibility and interrelationship of introductory and concluding sequences to influence the reader's attitude toward material in the essays and to make that material more easily accessible to the reader. Such reader orientation supports the audience awareness for which Rick Eden and Ruth Mitchell argue in "Paragraphing for the Reader." They point out that readers place special emphasis on the openings and closings of paragraphs because "readers expect the initial sentences of a paragraph to orient them" and "expect to find at each paragraph's endpoint something which merits special attention" (Eden and Mitchell). We suggest that readers also have the same expectations of an essay, with the introductory and concluding sequences receiving reader emphasis. The approach Eden

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and Mitchell advocate for teaching freshmen how to structure their paragraphs is the same approach practiced by professional writers in structuring their essays.

Introductions

The first step in our study was to determine the extent of the introductions of each article. In reading an article, we attempted to identify the writer's main points. Then, we simply marked as the introduction everything that preceded the paragraph in which the first point was taken up. Also, we outlined each introduction, describing the various devices used for gaining the reader's interest. Much of the terminology was borrowed from textbooks, but in a few instances, we developed our own.[2] Finally, we identified the thesis by looking for the sentence or sentences that best expressed the main idea of each article.

Our findings are summarized in Table 1. The number of paragraphs in the introductions ranges from zero to fourteen with the average number being approximately four. Although this is a fairly wide range, most of the articles contain introductions of five paragraphs or less. Only one article has a "standard" one-paragraph introduction. This preponderance of introductions with more than one paragraph indicates that it is more accurate to speak of an introductory sequence than an introductory paragraph. This concept of the introduction as a paragraph sequence supports Paul Rodgers' theory that discourse is divided into stadia of thought rather than paragraphs.[3] Specifically, the introductory sequence is the first stadium of discourse in an essay; it includes all material preceding the paragraph in which the first major point is taken up, and it orients the reader to the subject.

But how do professional writers structure their introductions to orient the reader? We found that the various writers employ a number of attention-getting devices in their opening sequences. The single most popular device in the introductions of the articles we studied is the anecdote, but other devices are used also, including a quotations or quotations, a question, statistics, an important word, a call for action, a generalization, and a contrast. However, instead of using only one device, many writers employ several different devices within their introductory sequences. For example, Alan Trustman's article begins with a question, which leads into an anecdote, which leads, in turn, into a second anecdote. Next comes the thesis, followed by a transition into the first major point of the article. The Carl Sagan selection begins with two quotations, which are broadly related to the topic. After the quotations, Sagan immediately picks up with an anecdote, comments on the anecdote, and poses a question. Then an observation is made, followed by more questions and possible answers; the possible answers are rejected, and the thesis is stated. Obviously, each introduction has its own unique pattern, but it is noteworthy that practically all of these writers employ several different devices in their introductions, using the initial attention-getting device as a springboard into the rest of the introduction.

Our study of the theses proved interesting indeed. We decided that all but two of the articles contain theses. Of those two articles, one has an implied thesis. The other article is divided into ten sections, each with a topic sentence, but the essay as a whole has no single main idea, and thus no thesis.

Of the articles containing theses, only one has the thesis at the beginning of the introductory sequence. Eight contain theses in the middle of the introductory sequence, eight contain theses at the end of the introductory sequence, and two contain theses elsewhere in the essays. In the article by Yuri Luryi and George Feifer, the thesis appears in the body of the essay. In the article by Lester Thurow, the thesis appears at the end of the essay in the conclusion. Three articles contain theses which are begun in the introductory sequences and are completed elsewhere in the essays. We termed this kind of thesis a delayed-completion thesis, based on Richard Braddock's concept of the delayed-completion topic sentence.[4] Jacques Barzun's article "The Professions Under Siege" provides an example of a delayed-completion thesis. About halfway through the introductory sequence, Barzun states part of his thesis concerning society's attack against the professions. Later, in Paragraph 37, he completes his thesis by stating that if the professions are to survive, they must recover their mental and moral force. In general terms, the main idea of this essay is that there is a problem and a solution; to see one or the other as the thesis would be to miss half the point. One must include both ideas in the thesis.

Conclusions

Conclusions are not difficult to recognize. In each article of the corpus an unmistakable shift in tone signals the beginning of the end. In seventeen of the articles this tonal shift consists of a distinct semantic break and a change in the direction of thought. For example, Alan Trustman in "Who Killed Hollywood?" chronicles changes in the movie industry since the late 1940's. The tone of his conclusion, which addresses the industry's future, shifts from the matter-of-fact approach of historical narration to the tentativeness of speculative exposition. The change in direction is clearly marked by a question, "Where are we going from here in the movies?" The thirteen-paragraph answer to this question is filled with questions and with conditional auxiliary verbs like *would*, *could*, and *may*. Declarative statements are reduced to infinitive phrases framed by expressions like "I expect" and "I anticipate."

In the remaining seven articles (all in *Saturday Review*), the conclusion is signaled by an explicit transitional device and a less dramatic change in the direction of thought. For example, Robert Claiborne in "The Great Health Care Rip-off," after a development in which he demonstrates the waste engendered by insurance and government health-care programs, introduces his six-paragraph conclusion with a transitional phrase: "*For all that* [italics ours], it would be wrong to see Medicare-Medicaid as merely a bonanza. . . ."

One definition of a conclusion thus becomes the essay's last stadium of discourse, which is unified by a single tone. Just as the introduction is often an introductory sequence of paragraphs, so the conclusion is often a concluding sequence of paragraphs. In the corpus, one concluding sequence contains thirteen paragraphs. All the others range from one to seven. The length of the concluding sequence and the number of paragraphs seem to depend on how the writer chooses to present, arrange, and focus material rather than on a formula based on the length of the article or on an abstract concept of the conclusion as an entity of predetermined length.

The use of rhetorical devices in conclusions also parallels that in introductions. Many of the devices used are the same, and writers tend to use combinations of devices. By consolidating material from several composition textbooks, we compiled the following list of rhetorical devices to use in analyzing conclusions: summary, restatement of thesis, repetition of main points, most important point, call to action, question(s), prediction(s), quotation(s), example(s), evaluation of thesis, and conclusion(s) drawn from evidence in the essay. Study of articles in the corpus indicated a need for two other categories: statement of thesis and completion of thesis.

In only six of the articles do the conclusions contain a single rhetorical device. An example is Claiborne's article (cited above), which simply presents a summary of the article's main ideas. In the remaining eighteen articles, conclusions are developed by a combination of two to four devices. For example, Trustman's conclusion (cited above) contains questions and predictions. These various combinations of devices indicate that there is no formula that predetermines the structural composition of a concluding sequence.

Rhetorical devices used in conclusions seem to fall into two clusters. One includes restatement of thesis, summary of the main idea(s), and evaluation of thesis; the other encompasses statement of thesis, completion of thesis, statement of the most important point, broader implication(s), call to action, conclusion(s) based on evidence in the essay, prediction(s), and question(s). Opinion(s) based on the thesis or on evidence in the essay, example(s), and quotation(s) belong to neither cluster, but are most often found in combination with devices from one cluster or the other. Because the first cluster of devices is directly implied by a thesis already stated and by its development, we have called conclusions developed by these devices intensive,. Because conclusions developed by devices in the second cluster make a leap from the development to the thesis or beyond the thesis and development in some other direction, we have called these conclusions expansive. Classifying concluding sequences as intensive or expansive defines the interaction the writer intends between the reader and the thesis. Intensive conclusions direct the reader inward toward a thesis stated and developed in the essay, while expansive conclusions direct the reader outward—either toward a thesis stated at the essay's end or toward ideas that are outgrowths of the thesis and its development.

Relationships Between Introductions and Conclusions

A final observation based on the articles we studied relates introductions and conclusions and indicates how they work together to shape the reader's perception of material presented in the essay. In all articles, related phrases appear in both sequences. These key phrases may be linked by repetition, synonymity, antonymity, combination with different terms, negation, or some other kind of semantic modulation, such as addition or deletion of quotation marks that signal connotations.

For example, in Banks's "Memo to the Press: They Hate You Out There," the key phrases are *the "invisible shield"* and *the shield*. The article deals with the tension between business and the press. Banks's thesis is that journalists do not realize the intensity of the antagonism business leaders feel toward them and that they are not willing to listen to criticism or to take responsibility for improving their relations with the business world. Journalists, he says, are protected by an "invisible shield" like the one in the old Colgate toothpaste commercials, an invisible shield of self-righteousness and defensiveness. He explores the tensions he has posited, he points out areas where business has legitimate complaints and instances when journalists have found businessmen hard to deal with, and he suggests that journalists make an effort to see their own position objectively and to make sure they act as responsibly as they expect individuals in other sectors of society to act. By repeating his image of the shield in the concluding sequence, this time without the quotation marks or the modifier *invisible*, Banks reinforces the idea of exposing a problem journalists prefer to ignore. Connotatively, the effect of this essay's development is to make the invisible shield visible.

Banks's introductory sequence key phrase, like many others in the corpus, does not appear in the thesis. In fact, key phrases occur in the thesis in only eight of the twenty-four articles. Obviously, they are not necessarily a statement and a restatement of the main idea; their function appears to be primarily connotative. Yet they are crucial to the working of unity in the article. Even without reference to the thesis and its development, many of the titles and paired key phrases indicate the subject, as well as the direction, of the articles from which they come. (See Table 2.)

All the key phrases in the corpus function as cohesive devices to bind together the ideas of the essay linguistically. However, they are also rhetorical devices because they play a significant role in shaping the direction of the essays and in influencing the reader's attitude toward the thesis and toward the material presented in support of it.

From the standpoint of rhetorical structure, the key phrases function much like the tonic chord to which a musical composition returns or the design principle which demands that the lines of a visual artwork direct the eye from one point to another within the work, always moving but held to the artspace. The key phrase is processed by the essay; and even if it is repeated, its meaning has been modified between the introductory and concluding sequences. The essay does not end where it began. Instead the key phrases act as facing two-way mirrors that not only reflect one another but throw the reader's thought back through the modification process. The pattern is simple, its effect powerful.

An Example

John R. Silber's article "The Tuition Dilemma" provides an apt example of how an introduction and conclusion can work together effectively. The introductory sequence consists of the first two paragraphs:

> Something fundamental must be done--and done soon--if America is not to default on its national commitment to equal educational opportunity. *Unless comprehensive steps are taken in the financing of higher education--steps comparable in scope to the Morrill Act of 1862 establishing land grant colleges, or the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 establishing the GI Bill--increasing numbers of academically qualified students will be denied access and choice in higher education simply because the costs will prove unmanageable* [italics ours].
>
> By introducing the Tuition Tax Credit Act of 1977, with the cosponsorship of fifty of their colleagues, Senators Daniel P. Moynihan and Robert Packwood focused national attention on this growing problem: paying the bill for college. Their proposal struck a nerve in the American electorate so sensitive that the Carter Administration and members of Congress opposed to the measure have swiftly introduced alternative legislation that would increase current programs of financial aid and raise the limits of family eligibility to include a portion of the middle class (Silber, 31).

This introductory sequence illustrates the effective use of several rhetorical devices. Silber begins with a call for action, proceeds to a statement of the problem, and winds up with an anecdote.

In addition, this article provides an excellect example of an effectively used delayed-completion thesis. A portion of the thesis appears in the introductory sequence and is embodied in one of the rhetorical devices--the statement of the problem. (See italicized sentence in excerpt.) Silber then discusses the problem in detail in paragraphs 3 through 16. The thesis is completed at the end of paragraph 16 and in paragraph 17. It is here that Silber offers his solution to the problem:

> In order to achieve authentic educational opportunity, we must introduce the old-fashioned American principle that the person who receives the benefit is the one who ought to pay for it.
>
> The Tuition Advance Fund offers precisely that solution by gently but firmly transferring the burden of financing higher education from the backs of the

> parents to the shoulders of the student (Silber, 32-33).

The remainder of the article is a discussion of Silber's solution. In general terms, the main idea of this essay is that there is a problem and there is a solution. By using a delayed-completion thesis, Silber is able to draw his reader into the problem and then present his solution after the reader has been thoroughly convinced of the magnitude and significance of the problem.

The concluding sequence consists of two paragraphs. This conclusion, along with the last three sentences of the preceding paragraph, follows.

> Given society's stake in parenthood, and given the TAF's basic wish to help families, the problem might be handled as follows: If both spouses have borrowed from the TAF, and both have income, each should pay 2 percent. If they file a joint return, they should pay 2 percent of their combined gross income. If only one of them has an income, the repayment rate should be increased to 3 percent when that income exceeds $20,000. and to the full 4 percent when income exceeds $30,000.
>
> The TAF has no natural enemies and many natural allies. By equalizing educational opportunity, it embodies a value that is usually thought to be liberal. And by requiring that a large measure of the financial assistance extended to students while they are in college be paid back by the graduates over a lifetime, it stresses the importance of self-help and embodies a value that is usually thought of as conservative.
>
> The United States has a distinguished record of providing equal opportunity in higher education for our young people. The record is not perfect, but the Tuition Advance fund represents a means to eliminate the last financial barriers to access and choice. It will assure fiscal stability for most of our institutions of higher education, whether in the independent or the state sector, and assure that the benefits of education are, as much as possible, paid for by those who receive them (Silber, 36).

The final sentences of the body represent the rational tone of Silber's argument. The concluding sequence is marked by the first sentence of the next paragraph, which shifts to the more frankly high-pressured, personal tone of direct persuasion.

The conclusion is intensive, developed by two rhetorical devices: restatement and evaluation of the thesis. The essay is a tightly developed one that emphasizes a single main idea: Equal opportunity in education can be assured by implementing the Tuition Advance Fund, which treats all students equally by shifting financial responsibility from parents to students. Silber's title and key phrases reflect the directness of his essay in two ways. First, the title--"The Tuition Dilemma: A New Way to Pay the Bills"--combines with the key phrases--"equal educational opportunity" and "equal opportunity in higher education"--to express his two-pronged main idea. Second, the use of simple repetition of key phrases reinforces the straightforward development of the thesis.

Pedagogical Implications

The consistency of the rhetorical design patterns we discovered has reinforced our conviction that the analysis of professionally written expository prose can be a powerful pedagogical tool. Introductions and conclusions in essays like those we studied can be used in the classroom to teach three concepts essential to the writing process. First, the structure of introductions and conclusions indicates that professional writers use these stadia of the essay to guide the reader's perception of the subject. Study of these sections can demonstrate to students the importance of audience awareness. Second, discourse analysis can be used to show students that introductions and conclusions function as a unit, the two parts of which are related by the thesis. This understanding of organic design in writing provides students with a basis for organization that is easy to grasp, yet flexible. Third, discourse analysis allows students to see that writing the introduction and the conclusion, like writing the entire essay, is not simply a case of following a rigid formula, but rather one of making a series of rhetorical choices. The effectiveness of the introduction and the conclusion, as well as that of the whole essay, depends on how carefully those choices are made.

Notes

[1] Rick Eden and Ruth Mitchell have used the term *peripherality* in their article "Paragraphing for the Reader" (forthcoming in *College Composition and Communication*) to describe the psychological tendency of readers to pay special attention to beginnings and endings of paragraphs.

[2] The textbooks referred to are Frank J. D'Angelo, *Process and Thought in Composition*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1980); Ramsey H. Fowler, *The Little, Brown Handbook* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980); John C. Hodges and Mary Whitten, *Harbrace College Handbook*, 9th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982); James M. McCrimmon, *Writing with a Purpose*, 7th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).

[3] The concept of the essay as an organic unit composed of discrete but interdependent stadia of discourse was first presented in *Paragraph-Writing* by Fred N. Scott and Joseph V. Denney (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1893). It has been further developed by Paul Rodgers in "The Stadium of Discourse," *College Composition and Communication*, 18 (1967), 178-185; and "A Discourse-centered Rhetoric of the Paragraph," *College Composition and Communication*, 17 (1966), 2-11. Rodgers defines stadia as "the basic rhetorical constituents of prose" (p. 184), which consist of a single topic with its supporting material. According to Rodgers a stadium can be a paragraph, a part of a paragraph, or a series of paragraphs.

[4] Richard Braddock, in "The Frequency and Placement of Topic Sentences in Expository Prose" (Research in the Teaching of English, 8 [1974], 287-302), defines a delayad-completion topic sentence as "one in which the topic sentence seems to begin in one T-unit but is completed in a later T-unit" (p. 293).

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Appendix

Table 1

Article	Paragraphs in Introduction	Devices Used	Placement of Thesis	Paragraphs in Conclusion	Devices Used	Type of Conclusion
Atlantic						
Trustman	8	questions anecdotes	middle of intro.	13	questions prediction	expansive
Banks	3	question anecdote analogy	middle of intro.	5	question conclusion quotation	expansive
Silber	2	call for action anecdote	intro. and body	2	restatement of thesis evaluation of thesis	intensive
Raskin	2	anecdotes transition to broader topic	intro., body and concl.	3	prediction completion of thesis call to action	expansive
Sagan	7	quotes anecdote comments questions speculation	end of intro.	1	quotation broader implication	expansive
Aldrich	0	--	--	1	broader implication	--
Stinson	3	anecdote flashback	middle of intro.	4	questions prediction call to action	expansive
Fiske	9	anecdote statistics statement of problem examples	middle of intro.	5	quotation opinion	expansive
Harper's						
Chace	5	question statement of problems contradiction	end of intro.	3	restatement of thesis examples opinion	intensive
Peters	2	anecdote examples	implied	2	opinion example	expansive
Lyons	3	statement of problem important word examples	end of intro.	5	quotation opinion examples	expansive
Barzun	4	anecdote statement of problem examples causes comment	intro. and concl.	5	completion of thesis conclusions examples	expansive
Harrington	4	anecdote comment	end of intro.	6	quotations broader implication opinion	expansive
Bethell	3	statistics example comment	end of intro.	6	quotation questions example important point	expansive
Karp	2	anecdotes question	middle of intro.	4	summary of main idea quotations	intensive
Morland	1	quote comment speculation	middle of intro.	1	prediction important point	expansive

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Table 1
(Continued)

Article	Paragraphs in Introduction	Devices Used	Placement of Thesis	Paragraphs in Conclusion	Devices Used	Type of Conclusion
Saturday Review						
Claiborne "Rip-off"	6	statistics statement of problem question comments	middle of intro.	3	summary of main ideas	intensive
Sutton	14	anecdotes statement of problem	end of intro.	7	examples opinion summary of main ideas quotations	intensive
Wolff	3	anecdote statement of problem broader implications	end of intro.	1	summary of main ideas	intensive
Luryi and Feifer	2	anecdote flashback comment	body	2	important point	expansive
Claiborne "Prevention"	2	statement of problem, solution	end of intro.	6	questions example important point	expansive
Chernow	3	anecdote quote comment examples	middle of intro.	2	summary of main ideas	intensive
Thurow	5	statement of problem statistics example	concl.	1	states thesis	expansive
Cross	5	generalization anecdote comment	beginning of intro.	6	example summary of main ideas quotation	intensive

Table 2

Title	Introductory Sequence Key Phrase	Concluding Sequence Key Phrase
Atlantic		
"Who Killed Hollywood?"	my kind of movie	their kind of movie
"Memo to the Press: They Hate You Out There"	the "invisible shield"	the shield
"The Tuition Dilemma: A New Way to Pay the Bills"	equal educational opportunity	equal opportunity in education
"The Big Squeeze on Labor Unions"	ironclad grip	indestructible . . . gripped
"The Amniotic Universe"	godlike	godlike
"Preppies: The Last Upper Class?"	ideological struggle	the new Preppie idealism

Table 2
(Continued)

Title	Introductory Sequence Key Phrase	Concluding Sequence Key Phrase
"On the Death of a Baby"	Andrew . . . 15½ weeks . . . 1 lb. 12 oz.	an "Andrew" . . . 600 grams, or 300 . . . 20 weeks, or 16, or 12
"The Marketing of the Colleges"	the shift from a seller's to a buyer's market	the "buyer-seller" analogy
Harper's		
"America's New Strategy of Containment"	appeasement or isolationism	neo-isolationist positions . . . disposition toward appeasement
"Panama's Genial Despot"	"tinhorn dictator" . . . "fact-finding missions"	tinhorn dictator . . . "fact-finding" missions
"Politics in the Woods"	"natural" . . . "human" . . . Sierra Club pantheism	humanized . . . nature . . . half-informed Jeremiahs
"The Professions Under Siege"	demigods	heroic efforts . . . non-heroes
"To the Disney Station"	"Magic Kingdom" . . . corporate utopia	state-supported capitalis reality . . . Potemkin Village . . . Magic Kingdom
"The Disadvantaged Congress"	relatively more important	superfluous
"The Meltdown That Didn't Happen"	No one has died	where they will die
"Republican Virtues"	American nation . . . American Republic	cult of the nation . . . love of the republic
Saturday Review		
"The Great Health Care Rip-off"	reward inefficiency and outright waste	change the system of rewards
"Sunbelt vs. Frostbelt: A Second Civil War?"	regionalism	separatism
"Who Owns Our Beaches?"	Phyllis Wayne . . . Malibu	Ms. Wayne . . . Malibu
"The Indisputable Soviet Press"	the world public	the world public
"A Penny of Prevention: The Cure for America's Health-Care System"	health care . . . sickness care	health care . . . sickness care
"Douglas Fraser: Labor's Courtly Rebel"	class war . . . all of society	society as a whole . . . "class warfare"
"Embattled America: The Struggle for Global Markets: Where Did We Go Wrong?"	the falling dollar . . . the decline of productivity	the decline and fall of our economy
"Europe United: Could the Dream Come True?"	Great moments in history . . . unfortunate	an important date in European history . . . unfortunately

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INVENTED SPELLING

John Woodley, Carol Woodley, and Yetta Goodman

Missey has just completed the entire process of writing and editing a book for publication in her fifth grade classroom so that it may become part of the classroom library. As one last step before her book is typed and bound in its final form, she will list the members of the class who have helped her write and edit the book. It is her wish that these individuals be listed at the beginning of the book as her "editorial committee". She quickly writes out the names of the six people who were of the greatest help to her, writing at the top of the list, "My Editorial Commetii".

Missey's error in spelling is obvious. We may simply correct the mistake and attempt to teach her the standard spelling. Yet researchers in recent years have used young children's "invented spellings" to gain insights into what children know about language (Read, 1975; Paul, 1976). Perhaps, if we were to view Missey's spelling as an invented spelling and attempt to understand what she shows us about her knowledge of language through that invention we might be better able to understand and guide her in further development towards conventional spelling. With the spelling of "commetii", for example, Missey has shown us that she is aware of which initial consonant, which vowel and which set of double consonants are used to form the first four letters of the word. Beyond that, she has shown us that she knows the overall approximate length of the word, omitting only one letter, that the "t" represents the same sound as the "t" in "party", how to represent a lax vowel between the second "m" and the "t", and that the final vowel needs to be doubled perhaps to produce a long vowel sound or that an "i" in the final position produces a final sound as in school mates names like Patti and Debi. So it is that Missey's unconventional spelling reveals a great deal about her knowledge of the spelling system of English and this word in particular. It helps us understand the strategies she uses when she spells as she writes. As teachers understand what children do know about the writing system as revealed by their current spelling they are better able to help children like Missey gain control over the spelling system and provide them with greater freedom in learning to write. Teachers can also acknowledge the skill children bring to spelling, even when their spelling is not according to the conventions of the American English spelling system.

Missey is a fifth grade student in a rural Arizona public school. She is one of eighty-nine second thru fifth graders whose invented spellings we have collected and whose development we have observed for a year. In order to help these students demonstrate their knowledge of writing and to help them continually expand their capabilities in writing, we encouraged them

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to use invented spellings whenever they encountered a word for which they did not know the conventional spelling. This allowed them to write every day in the classroom without allowing spelling to become an obstacle to expressing themselves.

Spelling is only one part of developing control over writing. We believe that spending more time in the actual composition of stories, reports, and other writing is more important than using that time to study spelling. At the same time we want to be able to observe children's growth in spelling and understand more about their invented spellings.

By becoming more knowledgeable about the invented spellings generated by these students, we have also been able to provide experiences which help the students demonstrate greater control over the spelling system by always keeping the student's major focus on self expression through writing.

Progress in learning to spell is developmental (Gentry, 1981, Read, 1975). As researchers have studied the spelling of children in recent years, they have come to realize "that the ability to spell is a highly complex and active intellectual accomplishment, and not, as it has been historically been viewed, a low order memory task" (Hodges, 1981, p.9).

Evidence is growing that the more children write the more conventional their spellings become (Beers and Henderson, 1977; Hodges, 1981). In the same way that children generalize rules for oral language and sometimes overgeneralize those rules (Dale, 1972, DeStefano, 1978; DeVilliers and DeVilliers, 1979), the invented spellings of children are also based on rules that children have formulated about spelling and then overgeneralized. In much the same way that children refine oral language and approximate more closely adult speech through experience with oral language, they refine their spelling rules and more closely approximate standard spelling, if they have opportunities to experience written language through both reading and writing (Smith, 1982).

We wanted to know if the conclusions from the research were reflected in the spelling data we collected. As we observed the children's spelling it became obvious that the words children used most often in their writing did move toward conventional spelling during the year.

When considering the spellings of the children we observed, the question arose, "How do we distinguish between invented spellings and other nonconventional spellings for words over which the children normally demonstrate control?" This is an important consideration, for what may appear to be an invented spelling may have been the result of haste in writing, an oversight on the part of the writer or attention being paid to previous or subsequent words while writing. Therefore, whenever we found that a word was spelled in almost all contexts conventionally, we did not consider it as an invented spelling. If, however, the same or similar spelling occurred in other contexts or if only one attempt was made to spell the word, then the unconventional spelling was considered an invented spelling. For the purposes of this investigation, an invented spelling is a nonconventional spelling produced by the writer using rules related to the American English spelling system but which do not produce conventional spelling for the particular word. (As in the case of "commetii")

After gathering the invented spellings from the writings of the children, we categorized the most common types of invented spellings into four basic areas:

- Alternate Spelling Rules
- Alternate Real Words
- Bound Morphemes
- Phonological and Articulation Influences

This classification system is one which we found useful for organizing and understanding the invented spellings we gathered. Others may wish to devise their own classification systems or modify this system to meet their own needs.

We will explore each of the categories listed above and consider what children show us about their knowledge of spelling.

ALTERNATE SPELLING RULES

Our spelling system has not always been standard (Scragg, 1974). The system has gone through many stages of development in its history. It was only with the invention of movable type and the subsequent rise in popularity of printing that a need for standard spelling became apparent (Venezky, 1970). Spelling systems are very complex, influenced by linguistic, historical, and at times economic forces.

Words in English are borrowed from many languages. Many English spellings have retained the spelling form of the language from which they were originally drawn. These spellings may be highly standard when compared with spellings derived from the same original language but quite different when comparisons are made across language sources (Craigie, 1977).

As children become more aware of the conventions of our spelling system, they become aware that the same sound pattern is often represented by the same spelling pattern.

In conventional English orthography the same sound may be written as ER, AR, OR, UR or even IR. Yet the children we observed seemed to have discovered that the most common spelling for that sound sequence is ER and overgeneralized to words where the spelling varies from the common form:

SATERDAY for SATURDAY	(Grade 2)
SAILER for SAILOR	(Grade 4)
TERRER for TERROR	(Grade 5)
COLER for COLOR	(Grade 5)

Doubling letters is a common spelling variation in English.

Historically, the use of double consonants in spelling distinguished long vowels from short vowels with doubled consonants indicating that the preceding vowel was to be short. Doubled consonants were used sporadically and inconsistently until they were established by chancery scribes in the fifteenth century (Scragg, 1974). Just as doubling consonants developed historically, so it seems that the older children had greater difficulty with doubling of consonants than younger children. As children began to accept doubling of consonants as an English spelling phenomenon, they were willing to experiment with the spelling of many words.

It is interesting to notice that in three of these examples at least one consonant is doubled. The question for the child is which one:

TOMMORROW for TOMORROW (Grade 4)
COMISION for COMMISSION (Grade 4)
DISSAPOINTED for DISAPPOINTED (Grade 5)
BABBY for BABY (Grade 4)
DIPPERS for DIAPERS (Grade 4)

Long vowels can often be represented by doubling vowels (Craigie, 1977). At the same time it is important to keep in mind that the long sound of the letter "e" is represented in the 283 most common words in American English by at least eight different spelling patterns (Boyd, 1961). One second grade child we observed realized the EE was one way to spell the long e sound:

TEECHER for TEACHER
SEECRET for SECRET
PEEPLE for PEOPLE

Another common spelling pattern for a long vowel is to use a consonant-vowel-consonant-"e" (CVCE) spelling pattern which frequently results in a long vowel in the medial position (Craigie, 1977). Three second grade children we observed overgeneralized this pattern:

NITE for NIGHT
FITE for FIGHT
WATE for WAIT

Another set of examples involving vowels is this double O pattern:

BOOSHES for BUSHES (Grade 2)
SUBSTATOOT for SUBSTITUTE (Grade 4)
STOOPED for STUPID (Grade 4)

In these instances the OO has been overgeneralized and applied to words where a similar sound pattern has been perceived by children familiar with such high frequency words as look, boot, root.

In all of these spellings the children have shown that they are sensitive to patterns and rules as they write, reflecting a developing sense of how sounds and sound patterns are represented in the conventional spelling system.

ALTERNATE REAL WORDS

So far we have only considered non-words as the children have attempted to spell real words. Yet children frequently produce another real word. This is especially true with homophones. Historically, some deliberate attempts were made to keep homophones (words that sound alike) from becoming homographs (words that look alike) in order to prevent ambiguity in written language and to establish separate and distinct spellings for two words with similar pronunciations (Scragg, 1974). This may benefit readers more than writers since this distinction is a source of a number of invented spellings for all grade levels.

THEIR for THEY'RE	(Grade 2,3,4,5)
THERE for THEIR	(Grade 2,3,4,5)
MINED for MIND	(Grade 4)
SUM for SOME	(Grade 2)
LEAD for LED	(Grade 5)
TO for TOO	(Grade 2,3,4,5)
HEAR for HERE	(Grade 4)
WHOLE for HOLE	(Grade 4 & 5)
HOLE for WHOLE	(Grade 4 & 5)
BUY for BY	(Grade 4)
ROLE for ROLL	(Grade 2)
WOOD for WOULD	(Grade 3)
RIGHT for WRITE	(Grade 2,3,4,5)
REEL for REAL	(Grade 2)
ANT for AUNT	(Grade 2)

By producing the alternate spelling children show control of the spelling system because they do produce a conventional word that sounds the same. In order to develop a sense of which form is which children must experience both forms of each homophone in appropriate contexts. Such opportunities are only available through frequent and purposeful reading and writing.

BOUND MORPHEMES

In English the meaning or function of many words is changed by adding a bound morpheme to the base word. In some cases the spelling of a base word is altered when it is changed through the addition of a bound morphome. So it is that the "y" in "happy" becomes and "i" for "happily" or the "e" in "come" is dropped to form "coming". On a superficial level the rules seem to be inconsistent in application, resulting in the "y" in monkey not changing in order to form "monkeys" or the "e" in "cue" not dropping in order to form "cueing". The children we observed indicated that they are aware of these complexities even if they have not controlled all the complexities of the systems:

COMEING for COMING	(Grade 2)
HAPPIYLY for HAPPILY	(Grade 4 & 5)

When adding certain suffixes to certain one syllable words, the final consonant is doubled before the bound morpheme is added (Venezky, 1970). We found a limited number of instances of the phenomenon only among the second graders.

STOPED for STOPPED	(Grade 2)
RUNING for RUNNING	(Grade 2)
GETTS for GETS	(Grade 2)

With such spellings children show control over the spelling of the base word but uncertainty about adding the syntactic elements.

The past tense of most verbs is formed by adding -ed to the base word. The children successfully used that generalization in most cases. However, such spelling appeared among their writings:

DROWND for DROWNED	(Grade 3)
TURND for TURNED	(Grade 3)
TRIDE for TRIED	(Grade 4)
WICT for WICKED	(Grade 3)
SAPOST for SUPPOSED	(Grade 2)

Like the last two spellings listed above, British spellings of past tense verbs use a "t" (e.g., learnt, spelt, spoilt). In American English such forms as "slept" and "built" still appear in common usage.

It is important to note that there were relatively few examples of invented spellings involving bound morphemes as compared with the other categories. It seems that as children develop control over the spelling system, they learn to control bound morphemes fairly early.

PHONOLOGICAL AND ARTICULATION INFLUENCES

This final category includes the spellings that children generate through paying particular attention to the way the word sounds to them when they pronounce the word. Some of these words are pronounced by the children in a particular way as a result of their dialect:

TEESHER for TEACHER	(Grade 2)
GABAGE for GARBAGE	(Grade 5)
EM for AM	(Grade 2)
TOT for TAUGHT	(Grade 2)

Such spellings seem to reflect children's sensitivity to their own spoken language especially when they are spelling words for which the standard spelling is unfamiliar or unknown to them. Further examples of this can be seen in the next set of examples, which seem to reflect the children's pronunciation of the words:

PREDEY for PRETTY	(Grade 4)
TUXCEDOE for TUXEDO	(Grade 5)
TARIBLE for TERRIBLE	(Grade 4)
JURMN for GERMAN	(Grade 2)
SANWECH for SANDWICH	(Grade 2)

LUV for LOVE (Grade 2)
PEPOL for PEOPLE (Grade 2)
GUD for GOOD (Grade 3)
SCEED for SCARED (Grade 2)
EFIROWN for EVERYONE (Grade 3)

Each of these spellings can be explained by relationships between letters and sounds. We will explore this point by focusing on the last word in the list. Of the 20,000 most common words in English "f" always corresponds to /f/ with but one exception, the "f" in "of" (Venezky, 1970). This spelling may represent the child's attention to the "f" in "of". In addition F and V are both related in terms of their articulation. They are made in the same place in the mouth, but one is aspirated and the other is not.

These examples provide insights that the children we observed were able to represent what they had to say with some spelling pattern which was readable and not bizarre, though the child may indeed have selected a letter-sound correspondence which may not have reflected either adult pronunciation or conventional spellings. The invented spellings we gathered reflected the children's knowledge of the spelling system. The spellings all contained letter sequences and spelling patterns appropriate for American English orthography. All the spellings tended to approximate the length of the word in its conventional form. While some children controlled the conventional spelling system more completely than others, all the children demonstrated control of American English spelling to some degree of proficiency. What we have been examining here are only the spellings that were not standard, but in every piece of writing that the children wrote, they used standard spelling more frequently than invented spelling. We were also able to notice that some categories occurred more for the younger children, some for the older children and some for all the children. This gave us insight into development as well as the complexities of spelling at different age levels.

We developed a number of activities in order to share with the children what we were learning about their spelling. The teachers had regular "editing sessions" sometimes individually and other times in small groups. The mechanics of the writings were put into more conventionalized form in collaboration with the author. This was done only for stories, articles, and letters which the child chose for editing because they were going to be used for special audiences.

The children were encouraged to keep "spelling journals" in which the standard spellings for words selected by the children were kept. The children selected words that were troublesome, interesting, or that might be needed for future reference. In addition to the spelling, the journal entry might include the sentence in which the word had originally occurred and the child's definition. These spelling journals provided a systematic way in which the children could compare their personal invented spellings with conventional spellings. The children often categorized their invented spellings and then would generate their own rules for the conventional spelling. For many children this journal developed into a personal dictionary and resource, which they readily used.

Classroom discussions evolved at appropriate times about the ideas of idiolect (how an individual speaks) and dialect (how different groups of people speak). In addition, discussions sometimes focused on why and how standard spelling developed across dialects and across time.

Sometimes one child, who had already developed certain notions in spelling might present his or her ideas to the whole class in order to help other children think about the same principle. Children who were already aware of that same principle but still somewhat shaky benefited from the kind of support and encouragement received from such a discussion.

Most importantly, children were allowed and encouraged to write a great deal and use invented spelling to keep the writing flowing. The teacher accepted any spellings which the children generated and used them as means to help children understand and appreciate their own spelling competencies. We also encouraged meaningful and significant writing with options and choices for the children. Asking children to learn to spell without being involved in the process of using written language is like asking them to learn to play a complicated game by merely watching; they may get some vague, general ideas about the game, but the strategies for playing successfully, the thrill of involvement, and the personal drive to do well do not develop until they are personally involved.

> People learn the form of language through its functional use. Nothing contributes so strongly and continuously to language development as experience in using language (K. Goodman, 1979, p. 662).

This statement applies to spelling as much as to every other aspect of language. Spelling develops as children are involved in their own writing. Children need to be actively involved in writing for purposeful and personally significant reasons. As they write throughout their school experiences, both the function and the form of conventional spelling will develop.

SPELLING

Richard E. Hodges

Spelling instruction in American schools has traditionally proceeded on the basis that memorization of needed words is the most productive route of spelling ability. Indeed, spelling as a school subject has long been regarded by society as a subject whose mastery symbolized the value that diligence and hard work play in achievement. This view of spelling reinforces the belief that memorization is not only a necessary but an appropriate means of acquiring spelling skills.

However, recent findings of researchers who have studied how children learn to spell, together with new views of the nature of the English writing system, suggest additional ways in which spelling can be taught. The following is a brief accounting of our current understanding of English spelling and its acquisition. A list of suggested readings is provided in which in-depth discussion of points brought out in this digest will be found.

What is Spelling?

Spelling is the process of converting oral language to visual form by placing graphic symbols on some writing surface. Because writing systems, or orthographies, are inventions, they can and do vary with respect to how a particular language is graphically represented. (Chinese, for example, use a system of graphic characters that represent complete words or ideas.) The predominant kind of writing system used in a majority of the world's languages, however, is alphabetic in structure; that is, the graphemes, or graphic (visual) characters, represent speech sounds, ideally with a unique grapheme for each speech sound. English orthography is based on this principle. But, on the surface at least, our written code appears to be erratic, even untrustworthy, in its relationship to the spoken language. As a result, mastering English spelling has been regarded as an unnecessarily time-consuming and arduous task.

In the past several years, however, linguists and others interested in English orthography have helped to clarify the actual relationship between our writing system and the spoken language. Their studies have revealed that English orthography, while appearing quite irregular on the surface, is considerably more logical than it appears when examined at deeper, more complex levels of language. Their work reveals that such factors as the relationship among letters within words, how prefixes and suffixes are appended to roots, and how words that are related in meaning remain related in spelling despite sound changes (e.g., derive-derivative-derivation) are fundamental properties of the orthography.

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How Is Spelling Ability Developed?

Just as there have been significant gains in our knowledge of English orthography, so also do we now better understand the nature of spelling ability from studies of how young children learn to spell.

One of the first major studies to examine how children begin to learn to spell was conducted by Charles Read, a linguist now at the University of Wisconsin (Read 1971, 1975a, 1975b). Read looked at the ways in which children four to eight years old used their knowledge of English phonology (the sounds in spoken English) to spell words. Among his subjects were approximately twenty preschoolers who were able to identify and name the letters of the alphabet and to relate the letter names to the sounds of words. These children then "invented" spellings for words that they wrote or constructed by arranging movable letters. Read found that even at an early age children are able to detect the phonetic characteristics of words that English spelling represents. More interesting, although these young children misspelled most of the words they attempted, with minor variation they misspelled the words in the same ways. For example, children typically spelled the sounds of words with the alphabet letters whose names were like those sounds: *bot* for *boat*, *fas* for *face*, *lade* for *lady*.

What Read's seminal work disclosed was that children, even very young children, try to make sense of the world around them by using the information that is available to them; in this instance they applied their intuitive knowledge of the sound structure of English to spelling. Moreover, Read demonstrated that the judgments of children about relationships between speech and writing are qualitatively different from those made by adults. In short, learning to write, like learning to speak, is a developmental process.

But what about the spelling strategies of older students? One examination of spelling development among youngsters in later school years was undertaken by Shane Templeton (1979). To determine the extent to which knowledge of graphic structure contributes to spelling ability, he studied the abilities of sixth-, eighth-, and tenth-graders to construct and spell derived forms of real and nonsense words. Templeton found considerable evidence that spelling ability does not rely solely on skills for relating sound and spelling, nor upon rote memory. Rather, both phonological knowledge and visual knowledge about words are brought into play when older students spell, the visual knowledge having been acquired, of course, only from extensive prior experiences with reading and writing.

These observations do not refute the fact that word memory plays an important role in spelling ability. But, just as we now know more about the complex structure of our written code, we also now know that spelling ability involves more than a memory of the spelling of individual words. Researchers' observations reveal that spelling ability is a developmental achievement gained through interaction *over time* with the orthography in both writing and reading. With experience, children learn much about the general structural properties of English words--about their sounds, graphemes, roots, affixes, and so on. Learning to spell, in short, involves learning about *words* over a long duration and in a variety of contexts.

Implications for Instruction

Among the several important insights that have been gained about the nature of spelling ability, perhaps the most important is the realization that this ability involves more than word memory skills. Learning to spell involves learning about written language in everyday use and about the interrelationships of components of words as reflected in the orthography. We need to be aware that students contribute actively to their own learning. Accordingly, we need to provide them with numerous and frequent opportunities to explore English spelling in the context of daily writing and reading activities. Although formal spelling study has a legitimate place in the school curriculum, every interaction with written language both in and out of spelling class provides students with opportunities to gain new information about the structure and uses of the written code. The foundation of spelling instruction is the study of written language itself.

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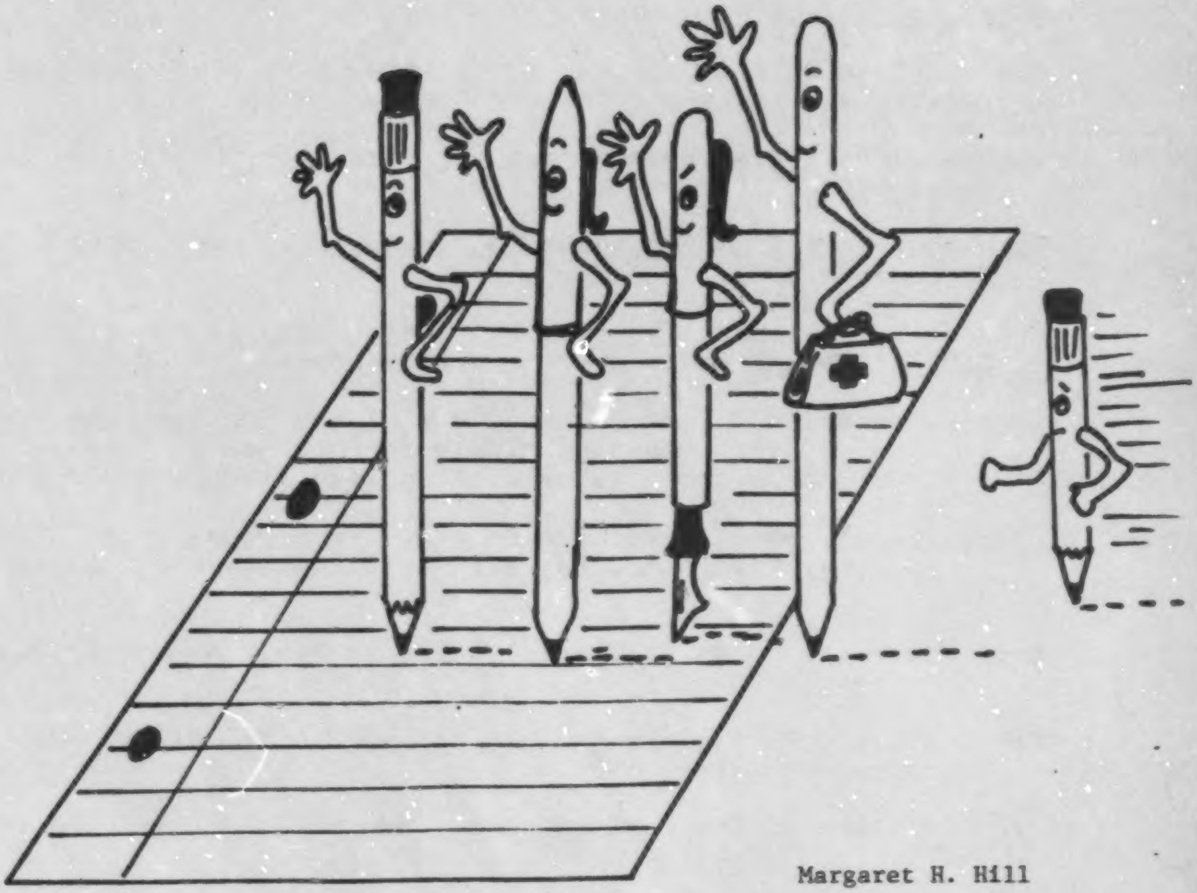

Margaret H. Hill

MODES REVISITED

Virginia White Oram

Our rhetoric faculty recently abandoned modes: description, narration, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, classification, and definition. Modes are not fashionable now. You can see the question on the book salesmen's faces before they start pushing their wares: Is this place old-fashioned or up-to-date?

If a department is modish, it has abandoned modes. (Odd that the word should be the same.) Those who are au courant like process: brainstorming (a word taken from business, alas), mapping, heuristics, freewriting. Product has become a dirty word, and modes stress product.

I have been through a number of fads in my years of teaching freshman English. One department head insisted that concern with "persona" was the key to freshman writing. Another, a film buff, had students write only about short films. One staff member insisted that all papers should be inspired by a strong emotion such as hatred. Another used the Odyssey as a springboard to all writing.

Teaching the whole course as argument is the hobbyhorse of some. Research papers go in and out of fashion, as any librarian will tell you. "Empty exercises." "Too much chance for plagiarism." (One large institution became so disturbed about plagiarism that it cataloged all research papers and stored them in a dark dungeon. A curator finally had to be hired.)

Whether freshmen should study literature and write about it exclusively is another question. Many of the most reputable universities use this method. We must decide what we want the students to learn or whether we want them to learn at all. No one would take the negative of the second position, but if we want them to learn to write, the literature method is perilous. The students are all high school graduates of that method, and few can write. Most prefer not to write about literature when given a choice. It's simply too difficult. A junior English major often finds himself taxed when he has to write a paper on the motivations of Iago, for instance. Why should we expect freshmen who are not literature majors to manage such a paper?

I suspect that many of us stress writing about literature because most of our training is not in writing per se, but in writing about literature. We write and publish critical literary studies rather than essays on other sorts of topics. That's our background, and we want to create the students in our own image. The trouble is that we have the whole student body to educate, and few will major in English, while many will write something, sometime. It's disturbing to consider that scholarly writing may actually be antithetical to art. In an interview, Alison Lurie

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says, "I think there's a natural antagonism between the world of art and the world of scholarship" (Todd, 1983).

It's nonsense to insist that only one method of instruction can produce good writing. Some students will write well regardless of the instruction. But I have found that freshmen writing students profit from a reader--largely expository--plus any sorts of relevant handouts that can be legally copied. My students like model papers, particularly those by me or by my former students. A definition paper on noise, showing how noise is relative or only what the hearer thinks it is, gives students more direction on how to write a definition than any textbook discussion. A comparison-contrast paper showing how a brother is different from his sister is within the power of anyone who is not an only child.

Modes give freshmen security. Quite properly, we take away all the foolish proscriptions from high school, such as not to use I or you or contractions. But we need some enclosure. Telling a student, "Go, thou, and write what is in thy heart" is apt to paralyze him.

Oddly, some of those who most strongly advocate the abolition of modes give whole-page analytical guidelines for assignments with a specific outcome desired, but no written model. As I know from working in a Writing Center, students are often bewildered by such assignments, but are afraid to ask teachers for help. The old cry "What does she want?" becomes piteous.

Many teachers protest that modes are artificial, that few pieces of writing are in one mode or another. Much writing has some description or a bit of narration or some argument, certainly, and it would be foolish to argue otherwise. But much writing is primarily definition or comparison or classification. A great deal is certainly argument.

It is not necessary to pretend to students that modes exist totally isolated from each other, but we can maintain that this method of teaching is a convenient way for them to write different sorts of interesting papers from their own experience.

Presumably all writing teachers are working toward the expression of a thesis or statement of purpose. Even descriptive papers should be purposeful: a college woman describes her bedroom at home as the bedroom of a child. In fact, one of my most successful assignments has been: "Describe your hometown with one focus." Students have chosen to write on the town that time forgot, or the town that worships order, or the town that can't accept integration--all their choices. Even the titles have been inventive: "Russellville--Haven or Hell?", "Dichotomy" (racial separation in El Paso), "My Hick Town" (Lubbock, Texas, explained lovingly). This paper is purposeful description, an intellectual exercise in interpretation, drawing on a student's own experience.

Narrative papers can be purposeful without pointedly drawing a moral. A student can show, through a funny story from his childhood, how forcing a child to take music lessons is useless. A comparison-contrast paper need not merely state that the writer is different from her sister, but that younger siblings take for themselves what is left over in the way of personal qualities.

One of the recurring arguments against modes is that they stifle creativity, but I have never heard students complain that writing papers in different modes is dull. They have always seen plenty of creative models in my classes to show them otherwise. Invention (one of the up-to-date words) is, if anything, aided by using modes.

A recent classification paper (a form unreasonably dreaded by some uncreative teachers) divides all school cafeteria eaters into "Gices and Gultons." The gices are overnice, and gultons are gluttons, of course. Such lines as "A gulton rarely uses his napkin. When he does, he uses it as a truce flag in a food fight" demonstrate that no little candles are snuffed out by modes. Quite the contrary, they seem to encourage creativity while providing some form. The idea that all the students are writing the same type of paper (without the same material, as is sometimes the case in a literary response, for example) gives them a sense of structured, purposeful movement for the course, without interfering with originality.

We ask much of novice writers in the way of accuracy of usage, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary. We expect originality of diction and, most of all, ideas. Should we also command: "Write a literary paper and I will judge you as a critical theorist," or "Write a complicated analytical paper that I would like to write myself and have a predetermined view of," or "Write about anything in the world--no suggestions, no guidance--and I will judge you"? (The last of these three leads to the most plagiarism, by the way.)

Modes are not stuffy. Teachers are stuffy, texts are stuffy, assignments are stuffy--but modes are no more than graceful guidance for writers.

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PICKY, BUT POTENT: THE "PRECIS" AS CURE-ALL FOR READING AND WRITING ILLS

James P. Beck

To come right to the point (as an article on summary-writing should), I feel we teachers are still badly *overlooking and underteaching* the precis, that compact-but-complete rendering of the gist or essence of a text read. We maybe don't realize how much the precis can heal reading *and* writing ills; can build strong reading *and* writing skills, nine ways. Indeed, the precis seems the educational equivalent of aspirin, that modest wonder drug, common and safe, but effective, we're told, against a wide range of maladies from gout through rheumatism to cardiac problems and beyond.

Even more. Though I'm not really a county-fair quack trying to hawk a miracle nostrum, I present below a brief, class-tested unit with which, in only two hours, I can get my college freshmen to *read texts* three times more thoroughly than they can when entering, and also *write summaries* of those texts which are twice as cogent as their usual writing in terms of more exact diction, more mature syntax, more efficient parallelism.

For instance, the unit lets students quickly and thoroughly see the deficiencies of a bad summary, the characteristics of a good one, as below:

Cruttwell said that the lake has many bad things for the boater but he liked the fact that you could "get away from it all" up there and not be bothered. It is 500 miles north of Wisconsin.

Pleasure boaters find that Lake Nipigon's disadvantages include distance, and danger due to storms and rocks. But the Ontario lake's attractions include its pine scenery, and its quite-deserted solitude.

The precis seems a fine "vaccination" against reading and writing problems which otherwise used to persist stubbornly all semester. I hope readers will experiment with this in their own classrooms. I'll bet that precis-writing, a lively game and challenge, will work among today's rangily-rowdy highschoolers too.

Of course, we all teach summarizing already. So what's new about my method below? It's more sequenced, technically detailed, and initially much more picky--and even "oversimple," intentionally so--than usual. This is so students don't just *understand* the precis, but *command* it. Too, the unit has students read texts of varied types--not just the usual "*good*" writing with coherent and emphatic points, but also texts with more *informal* organization and *implicit* meanings--and also frankly *bad* writing, scarcely summarizable. All to strengthen young reading-and-writing skills interrelatedly.

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And students need such. My first-semester college freshmen, believe it or not, simply can *not* read a text with exactness--not even a fellow student theme or letter-to-the-editor or textbook section or short story--and then write the gist or essence of that text with *any* reasonable precision. (They *can*, two hours later after the unit!) But precis-writing not only corrects ills, it builds skills. Specifically, I've seen it begin to aid students for the following roles:

As reader--of varied types of writing (see the four types above).

As student--summarizing lecture notes, textbook and library materials.

As writer--checking one's own draft in process by reading it more critically.

As "editor"--responding to other, imperfect student writing in peer groups.

As employee--summarizing minutes of meetings; distilling lengthy reports.

As "communicator" in general--becoming aware of pitfalls along the chain between sender (writer) and receiver (reader).

As "stylist"--appreciating the almost-literary variations possible after all in precis length, structure, and style, as later in the course I relax the early picky rigor of the precis-unit proper.

* * * * *

But first goals first. We start with the emergency-room treatment of seriously-inept reading, the failure to grasp main point and to distinguish it from support and so forth. My colleagues teaching English 101 know, all too well, which of the following two summaries most students would tend to write on a paper about alcoholism, for instance:

Alcoholism in our society has a number of causes. Especially people being badly adjusted in reality to begin with.

Current expert opinion feels that alcoholism in America is caused mainly by psychological factors. Secondary causes include heredity, culture, and economic stress.

The right-hand version illustrates my pocket *definition* of the precis. (It may differ from many textbook definitions.) It is "*all in small*, *but only that*, *and all in order*, *and in proportion too*." That is, the precis gives a truly complete *gist* of a reading (the entire thesis-plus-major points), but *only* that--none of the text's supporting specifics (with some exceptions noted later), and surely none of the precis-writer's personal response to the text either. And (again with qualifications) the precis retains the order of the original. Indeed, a good precis will permit a reader of it to reconstruct the outline of the original article summarized which the precis-reader never did read! Finally, the precis maintains proportion. It emphasizes the text's major points, subordinates minor ones.

But students can't read and write thus. They'll only create "sloppy summaries," as I name such as the left-hand version above. So I start the precis unit as follows. (1) I define the precis, as above, and give the two examples above. (2) Then I assign students to bring to the next class their written summaries of three readings I give them. One of these is always a certain student-newspaper letter. Here is my version of a proper "precise precis" of it. (From that, can you outline the original letter--I hope?)

> UW-Whitewater is inefficient. The dormitories permit unswept corridors, overlook inefficient and dangerous elevators, and compel students to buy their own room paint. Also, the recent sidewalk construction impedes pedestrians between classes. Finally, the cafeteria disciplines their workers badly, and serves inferior food in unclean surroundings.

And here is a comparatively good first-time student attempt:

> The letter discusses that the writer did not like the food situation and the dormitories. He says that the elevator doors close dangerously and also taking a long time to get from one floor to another when you have to get to classes.

A specimen-bottle for this one, please; it exhibits nicely the gross symptoms of the indigenous plague, the Sloppy Summary. True, it does present some of the actual specific points (though not even the overall thesis!) But it fails to separate point from specific supportive example thereof. It also disproportionately dilates one minor point--elevator inefficiency. Finally, of course, it violates the order of the original text. Thus is displays shabby reading ability.

But I don't open the precis hour by discussing the students' summaries of the letter--not yet. Rather, I first project or distribute about a half-dozen more "beauty and beast" pairs of sloppy summaries and precise precis of varied texts (real, or imaginary)--like the alcoholism example earlier. Whether exposition or argument, all are "good" writing--unified, emphasized point in coherent structure. Now we're really underway. The students scan the sloppy and the suave examples. The medication starts working. Some students realize instantly that usually, they only write sloppy summaries--including their newspaper-letter summaries for today. Equally instantly, most realize they can improve--and how to.

They've learned this through seeing paired examples such as these:

The writer discusses the advantages of trailering your boat behind your car instead of keeping it at a dock all summer. The writer can save money and go up to Lake Nipigon because of it.

Trailering your pleasure boat has many bonuses. It can save you money. It can expand your choice of cruising grounds. And it can make you independent of marinas in the summer, storage yards in the winter.

The advantages and the disadvantages of vegetarianism. It is not as costly as you think or unhealthy either, with Vitamin B12 added.

Is vegetarianism valid or not? Some types of this diet are somewhat hard to prepare, and unbalanced without nutritional supplement. But the diet can be made tasty, nutritious and economical too.

We can now move on to distinguish among four increasingly difficult *kinds* of texts, requiring increasingly-aggressive precis-reading tactics. The Type I or well-written text is easy to read because of its *formal unity*, *coherence*, *emphasis*. This group includes quality textbooks, brochures, also a good "five-paragraph theme." (And cf. the two pairs of examples above.) Type II writings probably make up *the great mass of prose*--essays, letters, articles, the works--whose points are clear, but appear in a more *informal or relaxed structure and emphasis* than the often-military Type I. Akin are Type III texts, whose *points are intentionally implicit*: of course literature, also mood-essays, fables, and the like. All too common are Type IV texts, frankly *bad* writing, difficult to read and to summarize whether because the ideas are not yet thought out, or because the ideas, though present, are phrased unclearly ("muddy"), unemphatically ("buried"), or incoherently ("scrambled"). Examples, unfortunately, are legion.

But we start with the easiest type of text to read. My instructions to the class regarding Type I material can be simply "Seek out the thesis-statement, then the topic sentences, plus the repeated keywords." Oddly, though, many students today need drilling even to recognize standard unity-coherence-emphasis! Difficult indeed my freshmen find it to grasp how the standard "theme" (or real-world brochure or instruction-sheet) emphasizes its ideas: (1) New paragraph for the new idea, with (2) an explicit topic sentence, which is (3) brief, and (4) at or very near the paragraph's start, (5) and uses keywords repeated later, and (6) perhaps is linked to other paragraphs' topic sentences via parallelism.

But now I must consolidate these insights at once, by having students experience them and their value--not just listen to me. So I compel students to write precis of a pair of paragraphs I've written (on community colleges; below). The first is as Type IV or meanderingly "bad" as I could write it. The second is to be as Type I fluid-fluent as I can achieve. This therapy stings a bit, but it works. Over the first paragraph the students' pencils slip and stumble, unable to extract any clear essence from its fog. But into the second their pencils cut nicely, its points standing in six-foot neon letters by comparison. This drill spikes motivation. It *shows*, *proves* to, the students the value of coherence. Readers appreciate coherence. Writers (the students included!) should use it. The two paragraphs:

> (I) The educational scene is today a fast-changing one, with many differences between yesterday and today. Some people still opt to go to a four-year university. The hometown community college lets high-school graduates get a two-year vocational education. My brother transferred into a four-year university with a good base in academic, general studies which he got from our local two-year college. We always felt "at home" there, as did the minority students. Dormitory fees at State were an additional problem for my brother, who also wished he did not have a gas-guzzling car when he drove there and back on the weekends.
>
> (2) Though many high-school graduates go directly on to a four-year college, they should first consider certain advantages of the home-town two-year community college. First, the educational. A two-year school can give both solid vocational training to prepare for a trade, and also a solid general-studies core for transfer to a four-year university. Also, the social; our small, home-town community college can give a sense of belonging (especially for minority students). Last but not least, the two-year school's benefits include the financial. My brother and I avoided both the dormitory fees and the commuting costs of a four-year college. So the two-year school is a valuable option today.

But now on to Types II and III, to avoid the admittedly-oversimple implication that all writing is (or should be) as hyper-coherent as the Type I stuff above. Now the class must work; today's Passive Pupils must arise from the TV Generation's barca-loungers and read more actively, to grasp and phrase material with informal organization, implicit points carried by anecdotal details.

I give a pair of bad-good precis from a Type II writing, a rather informally-structured essay on graffiti:

The writer is defining graffiti and is telling us why is happens. He is also telling us how to decide whether graffiti is of good quality or is really bad or inferior.

Graffiti is writing slogans on walls. It s caused by social protest, plus psychological self-expression. The more effective or witty graffiti are the spontaneous ones, not the pre-planned types.

The outline here? (I) Definition of graffiti. (II) Its two causes, (A) social, (B) psychological. (III) Its evaluation: good and bad. Drill may be needed here, for students to see structure in texts not super-regimented thus.

But then, quickly to Type III, whose points are implicitly showed through specific detailing: symbolized. As we know all too well, students read literature on an abysmally literal level. In Hemingway's short story "Cat in the Rain," a precis of the (implied) "point" might be "A husband's indifference can depress a wife until she is grateful for even small attentions from polite strangers to ease her dilemma." But students invariably write summaries such as "Nothing happens in this story except the innkeeper finds a cat for the American lady." Even short of literature, much non-fiction (magazine articles, student essays, case-studies) will convey point via showing of specifics, not just telling of concepts via abstractions. So my reading rules here are: "Look for explicit thesis-statements, but also really look closely at descriptive passages for any implied points. State the point in your own words or phrasing! If confused, read the writing several times very quickly, even 'carelessly,' relaxed."

But if I don't coach, the students will miss meanings an author has included subtly--or unconsciously. For instance, here are sample student precis of the student theme "Handicapped for a Day" which then follows. Both precis are better than they'd have been a day ago--but both, as we'll see, are still badly incomplete:

> (A) "Being handicapped for a day can teach that the handicapped need much strength, courage, and stamina to overcome their obstacles. I know I learned that I really couldn't do it myself."
>
> (B) "Because of the way I was treated during a wheelchair experiment in education, taught me that the handicapped need unusual strength, and courage."

Note that these writers have correctly plucked out thesis-keywords handed to the reader on a platter thus, but have quite failed to dig for other "points" which were implied by the events themselves, or were made explicit but not with bells and whistles. The text (here abridged):

> Handicapped people need more strength, stamina, and courage than you may know. I never imagined how much until I became "handicapped for a day" as a class assignment. This was the most meaningful experience in education that I ever had.
>
> We were to select our disability. Having a good friend in a wheelchair, I chose that. The next Saturday I headed to downtown Whitewater with a "blind" friend and a guide.
>
> Three young boys on bicycles showed genuine sympathy in their eyes as they politely steered their bicycles to let us pass. But that was the only bright spot in the day.
>
> Exhausted and sore-armed from wheeling myself five blocks, I had to go four blocks further out of the way to find curb cuts. But the drugstore did have a ramp. And yet, as soon as we entered, the pharmacist rushed forward, asking "Can I help you?" as if we were an emergency case. Then a lady stared right through me. It

> seems the handicapped are either patronized, or consciously ignored.
>
> Or else they get false friendliness. In the grocery store parking lot, a man in a truck waved and said "Hi," but unnaturally. Why must people act like this? Ungenuine cordiality (I saw a lot that day) accomplishes nothing.
>
> And as we rolled down the supermarket aisles, people stared again. An elderly couple dodged, as if to say "We'll return when *they*'*re* not here."
>
> The day taught me what the handicapped undergo, and also that I didn't have either the courage or stamina to deal with it. Next day, my wheelchair-bound friend told me, "Well, you become used to it, because every day you face the same thing." I told her I could understand--a little bit now.

Note this text's mix of explicit idea-statements plus implicit showing of other points. Scanning the text for its information-bits, as I also teach students to do *on a scratch-paper* not just in their heads, I arrived at the following gist in my notes: "Handicapped require strength stamina courage to survive. This is because of (and I listed the various factors). You must experience this truth to learn it." I then built these into my own precis--to practice stylistic variety, I wrote two:

> Because of physical barriers, plus negative social attitudes such as avoidance, ignoring, and even false, patronizing friendliness, the wheelchair-handicapped need much strength and courage--more than I found I had when I was wheelchair-bound for a day for a class experiment.

> The handicapped need much strength and courage, as I found during an educational afternoon in a wheelchair. I encountered only a little genuine sympathy, and a lot of physical obstacles and social attitudes such as shunning and ignorance and also patronizing and false friendliness.

A realistic aside. How well *can* we train students to perceive implicit meanings--and to remember to look for them unprompted? Types II and III are sticky areas! The bad news (as all teachers know): students *will* continue to overlook implied meanings unless we drill drill and reinforce this concept. The good news, however (as I for one think): yes, finally some of it really *does* rub off. Acid test: *early* in the course, teach one class the precis, but don't teach it to a second, control-group class. At the *end* of the semester, *without* reviewing precis-writing skills with either class, have both classes "summarize" selected writings. The resulting two batches are revelatory indeed. The precis of the experimental, instructed class *always* read as more sophisticated in their grasp of little half-implied ideas and the rest. So, a lot of the skill *is* retained.)

Finally, the Type IV writing which is frankly badly-written, hence hard to extract a precis from. (I here take the disease, not just the health, concept of writing, the notion that we should examine pathological specimens as well as those robustly, salubriously coherent. . . .) My rules to the students for reading this type: "Be alert to missing, or misleading, thesis-statements; irrelevancies; and points buried--either incompletely thought out by the writer, or thought out but unclearly expressed for the reader." As usual, I pair faulty specimens with fine ones; cf. the two community college paragraphs above.

But I also always have students write precis of *their own* writing, including drafts in process--and also of a classmate's paper, and then exchange and discuss the results. This sharpens reading and editing skills. And yet two other benefits of the precis arise at this point. It can help students be aware of where in the writing process (and in the general communication process) problems can arise. Is it with the *writer*? The ideas "embryonic" or not even clear to writer's self yet? Or "muddled," present on the page but not yet clearly expressed? And is the writer just inept, or perhaps intentionally unclear (as in propaganda, and many student themes with a high bull-quotient)? Or is the *message* itself too difficult, or subtle perhaps? Or is the *reader* too inexperienced in the subject--too inattentive as a reader? I've seen many college freshmen instantly grasp these somewhat-sophisticated insights about communication within the brief unit.

I sometimes end the unit with a slogan: "perfect (Type I) writing lets you *passively pluck* a precis from it; ambitious or atrocious writing (the other types) makes you *actively*, if arduously, *achieve* a precis." Or words to that effect.

* * * * *

At this point, so much for the two-hour precis unit proper. But I return to the tactic someweeks later in the composition course, when we study polishing one's style. I have students retain all those precis they wrote earlier in the unit. Then, during the "Style Shop" unit, I have students practice honing them. This works well since a good precis can and must be lucid, a polished cameo. My rules here--the very goals of the Style Shop--are: "Tighten the precis' wordiness by using keywords and by rephrasing the ideas in your *own* phrases. Make syntax more complex by (usually) putting main ideas in main clauses and subordinating secondary points. And phrase related points in 'parallel' style, so the reader relates them while reading."

For example, consider a "good" student precis of the trailerboating article:

> Trailering your pleasure boat yourself can save you money (no summer dockage or winter storage fees); you can increase your range of cruising grounds too. A sense of practicality and also independence from various factors that seek to control your boating situation can also result.

As a precis, good: "all in small" and the like. But as for style, not yet so good. I revise, to reduce wordiness, improve diction and syntax, install parallelism:

> Trailering your pleasure boat can save you money, expand your cruising grounds, help you maintain your boat easily, and free you psychologically.

Precis-writing's thus a good culture-ground for breeding stylistic finesse. (Especially parallelism. For instance, have students compare the second, tightly-parallel sentence in the "UW-Whitewater deficiencies" precis, above, with this warped version: "The dormitory corridors are dirty. You can't get to class safely in the elevators and charges are made for room paint.") We rewrite and polish two or three selected earlier precis to perfection, or exhaustion. . . .

* * * * *

So far the precis as a polisher of style. But its wizard uses aren't exhausted yet. It can also help me teach a vital (if overlooked and difficult) skill in writing, and in thinking in general. That is to try to avoid using methods and techniques (skills) as "rules" (fixed formulae) but instead as "tools" (flexible means-toward-ends; stylistic options). I can now relax the precis-unit's earlier militarism (remove the training wheels?) and we see how varied students' precis can and should show a nice variety, in four ways. These are what the length of a precis should be ("it depends" on its intended use). Whether its structure must always mirror the original text's outline (probably not, after all). Whether a precis must always exclude implicative specific details from the text (again no, if the details are thematic). And how widely different students' precis can legitimately differ from each other in general style (quite a bit, as it turns out, and instructively so).

Length's the easiest issue to resolve. No more rigid rule about length (such as "up to three sentences" or "20% of the original"). Rather, a more flexible "it depends," upon the needs of the reader of the precis. It should be as lean-and-lucid as possible, but not cryptic or telegraphic. For instance, I could trim the "university deficiencies" letter down to this spartan version: "UW-Whitewater needs improvements in dormitory conditions (corridor cleanliness, elevator safety, room paint allocation), in sidewalk maintenance, and also in cafeteria quality, service, and cleanliness." But I couldn't really pare the "trailerboating" precis down to a too-skeletal "Trailerboating's benefits include those of finance, geography, efficiency, and independence."

Then, structure. As the students have already been suspecting now, to be valid, a precis does not have to mirror or ape the original's structure. (See the "Handicapped" examples above.) I can now reassure students that although they must read a text strictly, to capture its substance, yet they may then write a precis more freely, in a way that organically recasts or rewraps the content of the original--a prime writing skill, "finding one's own words."

The specific-examples issue becomes a bit more complex. Our early rule said "include *only* the thesis"--*no* supporting points. But in practice, of course, many texts convey some points implicitly, through anecdotal details. A grey area appears: many students have already been asking, "is that a point, or an example of a point?" Hence yes, a precis can admit specifics after all, to render the point clearly, or a least can *interpret* those specifics. For instance, in this version below, the parentheses contain the *gist or point* of anecdotes such as about Uncle Fred and the Milwaukee marina:

> Trailering your pleasure boat can save you money (summer dockage and winter storage bills cut in half or more). It can expand your cruising grounds (400 miles by highway in one day as against taking one week by water). It can help you maintain your boat (doing repairs in your own backyard). And it can liberate you psychologically (you and not a boatyard control your boating).

Finally, the precis teaches stylistic *variety*, but still within a larger framework of uniform reading with precision and responsibility after all. Try this in class: have students read their good precis, in round-robin style, of a comprehensible but complex text. They, and you, will instantly appreciate how precis can differ stylistically, and still be okay. In most sessions, I always see a marvellous "both-and" dialectic sense quickly emerge. The students are being exposed to a nice balance between the chillingly traditional "only one right answer" of too much education, and the excessively tropical "well, a text can mean anything a reader sees in it" of too many students. For, there *is* (or should be) one main meaning in a text--poetry excepted--but also there *are* (we hope) variant styles for summarizing it. During this round-robin precis-sharing, students can quickly correct others' precis in genteel competition ("no, he really left out an important point there"). But they will also pass beyond my earlier oversimplified formulae, to subtleties ("no, her precis maybe doesn't keep the order of the original but still it makes the point well. And it differs from that last precis, but both convey the article's idea well.")

* * * * *

In short, the precis. The medication is palatable indeed. Students like it. They rate it high in the course-evaluations; for three reasons, I think. *Pragmatism*. Most quickly perceive its great value--in school now for taking notes, on the job later for clear communication. *Egotism*, too. Many seem motivated to avoid doing "dumb" Sloppy Summaries in front of their peers. And even *aesthetics*, sort of. Some students at times find it a zesty game to distill a complex, confused text down into its clear essential gist. And I know why *I* like teaching the precis, anyhow. It lets me practice the large goals and methods of education, if in miniature--relating subject to learners' frames of reference; also, progressing from simple to complex stages in a skill; also reinforcing by repetition; but especially feeling that the students learned something *useful*--better and more quickly than before, too--and that it was adapted individually, and not just mechanically. Hail then to the precis; if not salvation, yet modestly miraculous over-the-counter salve.

Appendix

Here for teacher and student practice are two student essays (condensed), plus evaluation of them in terms of elements of Type I through III writing, plus two sample precis. Do you, and your students, agree with the precis I've given here? Do you judge that they reflect the essays' substances? That their style is adequate? Or do we disagree?

Essay #1: "What? Babysitting's Boring?"

Absolutely not. Babysitting was one family after another--one confrontation after another.

With the family with six children under seven years, I confronted trashbags of stale diapers stored in the hallway, clothes scattered in the bedrooms, and dirty dishes piled in the sink. And, when one child was sick (a weekly occurrence), I tolerated crushing St. Joseph aspirins, wiping runny noses, and changing greenish-brown diapers ever hour, and giving the kids baths every Saturday, three at a time.

With another family I faced bare cupboards--excluding the Cheerios and Quaker Oatmeal on the first shelf and the Spaghetti O's and Skippy on the second. I endured the kids' moans and groans over the oatmeal for lunch and the peanut butter sandwiches for supper. I had to add cinnamon and raisins to the oatmeal, and to make open-faced peanut butter sandwiches with raisined smiles.

At the third family I gave the kids pizza for their supper and hot fudge sundaes, caramel corn, or buttered popcorn for a treat. And then I enjoyed relaxing in a lounge chair with pretzels, soda, and a late night horror show. And yet, I had to endure the parents coming home drunk at 3 a.m. (sometimes at 6 a.m.) and driving me "safely" home.

But with all families I walked to the park, played baseball on the school diamond, made mudpies in the sandbox, played Hi-Ho Cherrio and Candyland, and finally read Cinderella and The Little Engine That Could. I also received handmade Christmas cards with a scribbled "Love, Jenny" or "Love, Tommy" and usually a McDonald's Gift Certificate. And I definitely accepted their bear hugs, kisses, and the "I like you as my babysitter" praises.

--Cynthia Nack

Analysis. Misleading ("derailing") title and also topic paragraph; the essay really concerns good-and-bad experiences, not "confrontations." This is Type IV element. However, much Type

I controlled structure (rather that Type II informal shape). Also, Type III in its letting the "points" be made implicitly by the vivd details.

> Precis #1: "Babysitting was never boring, always varied amid good and bad features. Some households were unclean with no food for sick children whose parents would return late and drunk. Other households did have enough good food for the kids--and the sitter. But all the households' children let me play with them and showed me praise and affection too."

> Precis #2: "Although the disadvantages of that constantly varying activity, babysitting, exist and include messy households with bare larders plus sick children and drunken parents returning late, its advantages also include households with adequate food for the children (and creature comforts for the babysitter), plus the pleasures of playing with the kids and receiving their praises and affection too."

Essay #2: "A Question of Alcohol"

I celebrated my eighteenth birthday by drinking that many shots of liquor. My friend and I picked up two girls at a movie. Fortunately my steady girl friend, Marie, forgave me when I confessed and we're now pre-engaged. I was very lucky.

A year later, at a farm graduation party, I drove winding roads to buy two more cases of beer. Driving home, I remember almost falling asleep or passing out, and hitting the shoulder many times. But I made it home, scaring Marie out of her wits. Again I was very lucky.

At a dormitory party last winter, I downed twelve Michelobs, then more mixed drinks downtown. Inspired, I tried to do a back handspring on the way back. The booze, my bulky letter jacket, and my heavy boots were too much. I landed on the sidewalk, upside down. I had a headache for two weeks, a pinched nerve in my neck for longer. I could have been killed or paralyzed but once again I was very lucky.

Pondering these incidents, I asked myself "why do you drink so much?" I listed the advantages and disadvantages of alcohol. I found the only plusses were the good feeling and the taste. The many minusses rained down on me; they were the cost, the self-destructiveness, the after-effects. But I still continue to get drunk each weekend. This has me fearful for my future. Four of my five older brothers have drinking problems--Don smashed four parked cars in one night, Mike spends more on liquor than on wife and kid. But my brother Bill follows Dad's example and drinks seldom and then moderately. I'm anxious: which route will I be following?

By writing my real experiences and feelings about drinking, I had hoped to justify, or at least understand, why I drink to excess. But I'm not any closer to any answer now. I hope that readers will be sparked to assess their drinking habits for an answer, even if I couldn't find one for myself.

--David Offenbach

Analysis. A Type II structure, more informally varied than the usual five-paragraph thesis-and-three points theme. Definitely Type III in conveying three important points implicitly through the anecdotes in the first three paragraphs. (Alas--students consistently underread these as just irrelevant details!) Judgment needed here as to what are major and secondary points. Many related but different points to blend into a coherent precis.

Precis #1: "When a person drinks too much, to the point of 'cheating,' drunken driving, and personal injury, but can't reduce the drinking nor explain or really enjoy it, then this may well cause a dilemma for him--especially if half his family also drinks excessively."

Precis #2: "A young person may be justifiably worried if his drinking's disadvantages (cost, self-destructive and anti-social behavior, hangovers) outweigh the advantages of good taste and feeling, and if half his family also drinks to excess--all while he can't either explain or reduce his own drinking."

SHAMROCKS AND SEMI-COLONS: NOTES ON AN OLD-FASHIONED PEDAGOGY

Bill Linn

The following is the fruit of a summer research stipend granted by the University of Michigan--Dearborn which enabled me to travel and study in Ireland. The purpose of the grant was to complete work on a study of women in Irish literature and politics. In the course of my research, however, I encountered many university students. And as my abiding interest is the teaching of composition, conversation sometimes strayed in this direction. Invariably, when it did so, Irish university students expressed amazement at my specialty; to them it was rather fantastic that one would actually study composition at the university level. In fact, they found this rather laughable proof that, along with the American dollar, the value of a U.S. diploma has also fallen.

I knew something of the British system of teaching composition, one in which much writing is done, at all levels, without great concern for correctness. In the English primary and secondary schools--or the equivalent thereof--the teaching of writing is hardly a science; rather, the skill is developed through practice, and the use of writing as a tool to express feelings is de rigueur. Students write plays and poems and short stories; teachers read these and comment, but do not, as a matter of course, red-pencil grammatical and spelling errors. As is to be expected then, much more writing takes place in British schools than in American schools. And generally, the results are judged to be superior.

The Irish system in the primary and secondary schools is perhaps not as free as the English; student papers are red-pencilled, and grammar is taught and marked, but this occurs long before the student has reached the university. What follows should be qualified: the sample of student writing which I had at my disposal was not large, and I did not have any contact with the particular students who produced the papers I examined. But I do feel that a scrutiny of the papers yielded some interesting insights and, in one particular, a conclusion which has applicability to pedagogical technique and course design.

The most obvious difference between the papers of the Irish students at Trinity College Dublin and those which I am accustomed to receiving was in organization. By and large, the papers of American students (and here I am discussing work written in class) are better organized than those of the TCD students which I read. At first, this rather shocked me, so I reread my sample several times to be certain that this conclusion was not the result of sloppy handwriting or the nature of the subject material, with which I was unfamiliar. In the end, however, I was convinced of the accuracy of this observation. One would not term the papers of the TCD students poorly organized or forced into

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unwieldy structures so much as one would note the lack of a conscious effort to organize. The use of thesis statement and supporting detail was almost non-existent. Nor was there, for the most part, much in the way of introduction or conclusion. Students plunged into their answers to the questions (sample: How did the Crusades mark a new stage in European life?), seemed to jot down what they remembered, tried to turn a striking phrase or two to tie their answers together, then moved on the the next question.

Possibly this observation does not strike American readers as very noteworthy. Many will probably ask: Is this not what our students do, at least many of them? In order to speak to this point I must move back a step or two and describe the examination system at Trinity College Dublin.

The course for which the examination papers I read were written was of an entire year's duration--the equivalent of a two-semester course in an American university. And although the lecturer did know the students involved personally because the class was rather small (16), and the students did write a few essays outside of class during the term, the primary determiner for their grade--whether fail, pass, or pass with honors--was the final examination. Thus, in a very real way, an entire year's work in a course boiled down to one three-hour moment of truth. This educational structure--none or few research papers, few out-of-class essays, attendance at lecture not compulsory--is the traditional system at TCD. Most of the students in the theology program already have BA degrees from reputable institutions where the same system exists; thus they are well-acquainted with the rort of demand in terms of energy, recall, and nerve which such examinations ask of the student. Obviously, then, it would be in their interest to learn how to marshall their resources and lay out what they have garnered in a year's reading in the clearest, most forceful manner. Careful, imaginative organization on the examination papers could very well mean the difference between a pass and a pass with honors, although it is doubtful that mere finesse in this area could mask a lack of preparation and a poverty of ideas: the "fail" paper will still be a "fail," however well-organized. Given these factors it will not, I think, be difficult to understand the surprise I experienced when I discovered the lack of organization in the writing on the examination papers.

While discussing the weakest aspect of the TCD students' examination papers, it seems only fair to make mention also of their positive points; otherwise perspective may be lost.

The greatest strength of the papers was in the phrasing of individual sentences; in a certain fluidity and lightness of touch; and, in the better papers, in the incorporation, quite naturally, of a sudden and striking image, figure of speech, or play upon words which cut to the heart of the matter at hand, offered sudden illumination, and often summarized perfectly a mass of detail or a careful, step-by-step account of factors in a large movement such as the Reformation. Perhaps the best term for this quality, if such a term existed, would be "literateness". It betrays a feeling for, and love of, language for its own sake which one seldom sees in the papers of American students. A consideration of the probable reason for the absence of this quality in the papers of our students is intriguing, for it sheds much light on the essential differences in structure between the educational system at TCD and that which exists in most American universities. Furthermore, an analysis of this subject necessarily entails the exploration of a problem which has long bedeviled many teachers of writing: how to teach structure without destroying spontaneity.

Again, let me digress for a moment.

After I read through the examination papers I discussed them with the lecturer who offered the course, Canon James Hartin, whose specialty is medieval and church history. Canon Hartin has been instructing at TCD for approximately two decades and thus has a feel for the TCD student as he is today, and as he was. He is also a scholar of note, with a sure sense of style himself. He readily admitted that much of the writing on the examination papers was poorly organized, then added that this had not always been so. Once, he said, first-year students at TCD were required to produce an example of expository prose upon admittance. In those days students preparing for the university were naturally concerned about their writing,[2] and, on the whole, their written work at the university showed greater polish and organization. Canon Hartin volunteered that he had been taught under this system and that his prose still betrayed its effects. "Of course," he added, "my own prose is a bit stilted." I volunteered that the underlying assumption of the present system appeared to be that as the students read--and students at TCD must, independently, work their way through a formidable reading list--they would, somehow, learn to write; that organization, structure, even grammar, could be learned by example, rubbing off on the students as they mastered the texts in their chosen subjects. Canon Hartin smiled and said, yes, that was the belief. Quite obviously a gap between theory and reality exists at this point.

My own inclination in such matters, hitherto, had been to favor a school of thought similar to that which is in operation at TCD. I believed that one learns to write by reading and practice, and that formal instruction in writing is, for the most part, a waste of time. As a teacher of writing I say this with some trepidation, but until this point in time experience had shown me, quite conclusively I thought, that I was correct in this hunch. Most teachers of writing I observed hindered rather than helped their students, sometimes because their own prose was so stilted and pedestrian, but, more often, because of their unswerving adherence to a heavy-handed methodology. They were committed too ardently to teaching and not interested enough in fostering learning. Just let the students alone, I kept thinking over and over again. Keep your compulsively pedagogical hands off their minds, and they will learn to write.

Now I saw that this belief was not, at least without qualification, correct. TCD is rather small by American standards (approximately 5000 students), and while some inroads upon its quality have been made in the past decade or so it is still the elite institution in Ireland--the Irish equivalent of Oxford or Cambridge or our Ivy League schools. If pedagogical laissez faire regarding the mastery of writing skills does not work here--the perfect laboratory for it--then it is unlikely that it will work in less ideal settings.

My gut feeling remains that many, if not all, of the different "theories" of how to teach composition represent attempts to reduce a complex subject matter in order that it may be learned by those who are neither serious nor talented students. And I still believe that if students have the talent to write, the intelligence, then they should be let alone to find their own way. But I now realize that one cannot totally eschew a concern with structure even when working with top quality minds. The examination papers of the TCD students offer proof of this.

It is interesting that a lack of training in structure seems most crucial on examinations. The papers which the TCD students wrote during the term outside of class were probably, on the whole, superior to the essays of American students. They were organized but not in a mechanical fashion; rather, the particular subject treated, whether it was Coleridge's religious thought or evangelical divines of the nineteenth century, seemed to dictate the structure. This sensitivity to inherent possibilities and limitations seemed to me admirable--it is what I believe lies at the heart of all good writing. I am not certain that it is teachable; rather, it seems to be the sort of talent which, like Nick Carroway's "sense of the fundamental decencies in life," is not parcelled out equally at birth. On the other hand, I do know that the American way of teaching composition does not foster this talent, even if it should exist in the student. Instead, we tend to train the student to search the file cabinets of his mind for a method of organization or a rhetorical form and voice that another has devised, and still another passed on to him in the classroom. Originality and naturalness of expression are hardly developed by such an approach; instead, a mechanical method is substituted for intelligence and taste, and the dull certainty of another person's discoveries for the excitement of finding out for oneself. Here, I think, is the root reason for the lack of literary flair in the writing of many American students.

Yet interestingly--and here is the paradox--this same dependence upon a rigid, pre-packaged, rote-learned structure stands American-trained students in good stead on examinations; while their Irish counterparts, not trained in method, tend to ramble when required to write under pressure. The primary reason for this is, I believe, the time factor. When rushed, students do not have the opportunity to devise original systems of organization. These artistic inventions generally come to one in solitude, and it is rare that they come in such an innately violent (in an intellectual sense) situation as a final examination. In such stressful situations one tends to fall back on the known; one acts out of instinct, but that instinct is compounded, in part, of fear and anxiety which are not, innately, creative forces. And so the long-used, mechanical, teacher-approved form of thesis statement, supporting detail, concluding statement is the one that comes most readily to the exam-taking student's mind. Students who have not had this structure graved upon their minds are at a distinct disadvantage in such situations.

For this reason alone we should familiarize our students with some basic, formulaic rhetorical structures. There is an irony here, of course, for in doing so we are teaching an uncreative, unoriginal methodology[3] to students primarily so that they may fulfill the arbitrary criteria of the university. And, all too often, students are judged not on how independently and originally they write but, rather, on how well they have mastered the forms we have tried to teach them. Since I find such an expenditure of time and energy a bit egocentric (the university being the ego here), I advocate it with hesitancy. My heart lies with the rather sloppy, seemingly irresponsible method employed at TCD because it is, despite its looseness and disregard for the grave matter of how best to prepare the students so they may best entertain the exam-reading faculty, more consonant with the real mission of the university. There is often a wisdom in laxness, especially where education is concerned.

But what does all of this say about the problem of the organized but stilted vs. the astructural and spontaneous? How, in fact, it is possible to teach structure without inhibiting spontaniety? The answer, I think, is that it is not really possible. So long as there is structure--and some structure is needed--there will be a loss in spontaniety. The question then becomes one of deciding when the trade-off should be made and to what extent, and the answer is usually provided by an interplay between the student's personality and the exigencies of the moment. Difficulty arises in this regard most often, I believe, when, through over-teaching, the instructor (actually the educational system as a whole) has so cluttered the student's mind with useless formulas and methods that he no longer can discern the thread of his own thought under all of this academic folderol. Although the realization of this once cause me to despair, in time I have come to see that talented students generally find their way through the mess. We waste their time but do not permanently mar their minds.

But my title--what of it? Shamrocks and semi-colons. It came from the fact that so few semicolons appeared in the examination papers of the TCD students. Indeed there were few even in the essays which they wrote outside of class. I never discovered the reason for this. To me it's a mystery. One more unsolved riddle. I'll leave it so. --Slainte!

Notes

[1] The papers I will discuss were written by students in the course of studies at Trinity College, Dublin, which is devoted to theology. The sample scrutinized was, for the most part, made up of the final examination papers in a year's course in church history.

[2] The precise implications of this statement were not clear to me. I queried Irishmen who passed through the primary, secon-

dary, and university systems in Eire, and they maintained that writing as a subject *per se* never existed in their schools; yet, they said, they wrote continually in all subjects, even the sciences.

[3] I assume here that the activity of writing is in and of itself heuristic, that it teaches one something about how to think. A mind comfortably dependent upon the syllogism of thesis statement, supporting detail, concluding statement almost *ipso facto* denies itself a perception of the complexity and beauty of life. Straightforward logic is probably fruitful only in legal reasoning and logical abstraction.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English invites educators at all levels--elementary, secondary, and college--to submit manuscripts for the 1986 *Classroom Practices* publication which will focus on the theme, "Teaching Thinking--Really!" Articles should describe successful classroom practices that activate students' thinking--creative, logical, or critical. The intent of the book is to present strategies which emphasize students' active involvement in their own learning. Articles should therefore focus on what students do in the classroom. Manuscripts may include such topics as students' self-selection of reading materials and topics for writing; real-life problem-solving; and classroom activities that develop students' thinking skills.

Manuscripts can range in length from two to ten pages. Two copies should be submitted, with the author's name and address appearing only on a title page attached to the front of each copy. Manuscripts should be mailed before *September 1, 1985* to the Committee Chair:

Jeff Golub
4550 W. Sheridan
Seattle, WA 98199

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USING EXTENDED READING TO MOTIVATE ELEMENTARY COMPOSITIONS

Doris Prater

Development of proficiency in writing lags far behind development in both reading and oral expression in the elementary age child. According to Vygotsky (1962), one reason children are so slow learning a written form of language is that they have little motivation for it and only a vague notion of its usefulness. Others point out that the ability to sustain a topic is a necessary prelude to writing (Britton, 1970; Moffett, 1968). The development of the ability to carry on a prolonged monologue through sustained inner speech appears to be prerequisite to producing written pieces of any length. This ability to produce written pieces is not an ability that comes naturally to the elementary age child for a number of reasons.

The written product, unlike dialogue in which the speaker takes cues and prompts from an audience, must stand on its own. Writers must select which details of content to present and how to present them. Further, they must make these details understandable to another reader or audience. This requirement, to write for an audience, means that writers must move from purely egocentric inner-speech to some minimal awareness of an audience and begin to incorporate views other than their own. Piaget's concept of "egocentrism" denotes a cognitive state in which children see the world from a single point of view--their own. (Flavell, 1963) Gradually, children learn to "decenter" and can imagine others' viewpoints. Moffett (1968) contends that egocentrism plays a big part in inefficient written communication. These factors--lack of motivation and need for writing, lack of practice in sustained inner-speech, and the egocentric nature of writers at this age level--make writing a more demanding cognitive task than either reading or speaking. One effective tool that can be useful to the classroom teacher in providing motivation for writing and guided movement away from self to other points of view is the use of the novel as extended reading. The novel provides a useful vehicle to build on reading and speaking skills and to extend these to meaningful writing activities.

In responding to literature, Egan (1979) classifies students in upper elementary grades from ages 8-9 to 14-15 as being in the "romantic stage" of development. They no longer view the outside world as an extension of self, but are not yet able to make connections to some general unit. He suggests that they respond to "bright bits and pieces" and to heroes and heroines. The use of the novel for this age group can be useful in focusing responses to literature on longer units of meaning and providing both motivation and content for expressive and explaratory writing.

General Guidelines in Using the Novel as a Basis for Writing

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Activities

DO select a novel that is appropriate for the age level and that holds the interest of the reader. Some identification with the hero/heroine makes the assignments work better.

DO form small discussion groups of 5-7 students and include reading, oral communication, and writing in each session.

DO set aside a regular time each day or week for the group to meet. Establish a routine that will be viewed as a "special" time by the students.

DO have a copy of the book for each student to take home for the duration of the session. Sets of multiple copies of titles are not that difficult to acquire and can be reused from year to year.

DO use passages from the book to stimulate writing when possible. Always relate the writing activities to the context of the story.

DON'T have students summarize long passages. Emphasis at this level should be on detail, not on a synopsis of the story.

Suggested Activites to Encourage Writing

The following activities work well with students in grades three to five. To illustrate the writing activities rather specifically, examples are provided based on an excellent book for children, A Bridge to Terabithia, by Katherine Paterson (1977). The activities are designed to be used as a writing component in sessions which include reading (silent or selected oral passages) and group discussions. They provide both content and motivation for young writers. These writing activities may be kept in a journal which is added to and which serves in finished form as a product that can be shared with parents or simply kept as a reminder of a favorite novel.

1. Recreate a memorable scene. Students are directed to recreate in their own words a scene or moment in the book without looking back at the text. They are to choose one scene that stands out. Alternatively, the teacher may select the scene. Students may either take the role of the character or write in third person.

EXAMPLE: Read excerpt on page 24, Chapter 3

The boys quivered on the edges of their seats like moths fighting to be freed of cocoons. Would she never let them go?

"All right, now if you boys..." They didn't give her a chance to change her mind. They were halfway to the end of the field before she could finish her sentence....

"How many you guys gonna run?" Gary Fulcher demanded.

Assignment: Describe in your own words the race for the fastest kid in fifth grade.

2. Introduce a character in the book. A well written book makes characters come alive. Students are directed to acquaint their audience with a favorite character. Alternatively, the students may be directed to write about someone they know who is like one of the characters in some way.

EXAMPLE #1: Read silently Chapter 2, "Leslie Burke"

Assignment: Pretend you are telling your parents or a friend about a new girl in school. Her name is Leslie Burke. Write about things you would tell your parents or friend so that they would know what Leslie is like.

EXAMPLE #2: Read excerpt, page 34, Chapter 4

> "Now I want to give you a homework assignment"--muffled groans--"that I'm sure you'll enjoy."--mumblings of unbelief--"Tonight on Channel 7 at 8 P.M. there is going to be a special about a famous underwater explorer--Jacques Cousteau. I want everyone to watch. Then write one page telling what you learned."
>
> "A whole page?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> "Does spelling count?". . .
>
> Wanda Kay smiled primly. You could already see ten pages taking shape in her pointy head.

Assignment: Have you ever known someone like Wanda Kay? Have you ever felt like the story teller about assignments? Write in your journal about some of your experiences that are similar to the one discussed in this passage.

3. Recreate an emotion of a central character. Students are directed to remember a time in the chapter or book when the character was very happy (sad, excited, depressed) and tell about that incident.

EXAMPLE #1: Read excerpt on pages 60-61, Chapter 6

> At the stronghold he tied the ribbon around the puppy's neck, laughing as it backed out of the loop and chewed at the ends of the ribbon. It was a clever, lively little thing--a present Jess could be proud of.

Assignment: Describe how Leslie felt about her Christmas present from Jess. Explain why it was such a special gift.

EXAMPLE #2: Read selected excerpts from Chapters 10 and ask students to write about Jess's feelings when he learns that Leslie has died.

4. Incomplete sentence or paragraph from novel. This activity works well even though it has been used time and time again. It is particularly good for those books that end chapters with "cliff hangers".

EXAMPLE: Read excerpt at end of chapter 6

> "We wrote that letter," Leslie whispered. "But you mustn't tell anyone, or she'll kill us."

Assignment: What is the letter being discussed in this chapter, and why is it important? Write an entry in your journal entitled "The Letter" and explain its importance.

5. Dramatize a scene. Students are directed to write a script about any scene in the book. Duplicate copies for the discussion group and do a "read through."

6. Compare or contrast characters in the book. After the students become well acquainted with the characters in the book, they can be asked to tell how particular characters are alike or different. Another excellent assignment, when appropriate to the book, is to have students describe how a character changes in the course of the book.

EXAMPLE: Compare Jess and Leslie. How are they alike? In what ways are they different?

7. Describe relationships. Many novels illustrate relationships between characters in the story. For example, in this book the relationship of Jess and his sisters, Jess and Leslie, and Jess and his father are all well developed.

EXAMPLE: Read aloud the following excerpts:

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> "Daddy! May Belle screamed with delight and started running for the road. Jess watched his dad stop the truck, lean over to unlatch the door, so May Belle could climb in. ...Durn lucky kid. She could run after him and grab him and kiss him. It made Jess ache inside.... It seemed to him that he had been too big for that since the day he was born.

Page 5

> Maybe Dad would be so proud he'd forget all about how tired he was from the long drive back and forth to Washington and the digging and hauling all day. He would get right down on the floor and wrestle, the way they used to.

Page 115

> His father pulled Jess over on his lap as though he were Joyce Ann. "There. There," he said, patting his head. "Shhh. Shhh."

Assignment: How do you think Jesse's father really felt about his son? How did Jesse feel about his father? Whose feelings changed in the book?

Summary

Many other writing activities may be designed that are centered around an extended piece of reading that students do together. The interrelationship of all the language arts is commonly acknowledged. However, in practice writing experiences still tend to be assigned as isolated experiences. Such activities are often trite and difficult for students to develop. But, as students are provided interesting content and characters that they can relate to, a purpose for writing can more easily be established. Topics can be sustained for longer durations as a natural shift is made from reading to speech to writing. Such assignments develop the ability to bring order and relation to events in the novel. Writing can be enhanced and valued within a total communication process.

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HOW TO GAIN A REPUTATION

James Charnock

How many times have you been confronted by one of your students with the statement, "Tell me a good library book so I can get it"? And you couldn't get your mind in gear before the student decided to abandon you, in your embarrassment, and began to meander aimlessly through the bookshelves.

Or maybe you WERE quick-thinking enough to remember a book of interest, but felt at a loss for words that would grab the student's interest.

Even then you may have found yourself rattling off too much of the story, or, on the other hand, overemphasizing what a GREAT book it was, a REALLY great book, because that was all you could remember.

The truth of the matter is most of us do not read enough children's and young adult's books. In fact, if students ask us, on a regular basis, to recommend a good book, that makes us rare: we have been attributed with the reputation for knowing what is good to read.

Not all of us lack this reputation through any great fault of our own. Our day is crowded at school and away, with demands beyond the average. Our job, though often rewarding, is an exhausting one. And there is never enough time or energy to accomplish all we would like to as teachers, especially experiencing enough books to recommend or read aloud to our class(es).

Neverthelesss, not possessing SOME reputation for knowing good books IS the fault of some teachers. We know those who never read to their students and who, presumably, never know of any books beyond their own childhood favorites to recommend--should they be asked, which they most likely won't be. Then, there are those who have become familiar with enough books to fill up a year's worth of daily (or, alas, weekly) story time, a 15-20 minute event. These last teachers can be more professionally admired, but even they lack--and would most likely admit it--the resourceful knowledge needed to help turn their students into avid and wide readers.

The more we realize the responsibility for instilling a LOVE of reading in students, the more we will feel the need to become familiar with many and different types of books with which to entice them.

Once we desire to increase our familiarity with many more books, there are two approaches we can take. The first is simply to supply the students with a list of recommended books (better yet, to round up a few books on the list). Or we can become

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personally acquainted with a lot more children's and/or young adult's books. The latter course will give the greatest pleasure and make us more professionally competent in this area. It will also add to our reputation as a person who knows a lot of good books to read. And as teachers of reading (and here I include content area teachers, too) we should have such a personal knowledge and reputation.

What does the foregoing mean for you? A lot of work. But nothing so good as what you can become can be easily gotten. It will require many hours of reading before you will have a respectable beginning knowledge which can be relied upon to aid your desire to foster a greater hunger for reading. Your first goal should be to have a resource of at least 100 books you like. Note that I did not say to read 100 books: you may have to read 150 to get the 100 you appreciate. But 100 is the bare minimum. Two hundred would be a better beginning goal. And even with 200 books of different genres and varing degrees of difficulty, you will find the need to become even more knowledgeable. Your need will never stop.

Choosing books you can recommend or read aloud is quite a simple matter. If a book bores you, you can assume it may affect your students likewise. If it is a slow starter, are your students mature enough to hang in there until it gets more interesting later? (Don't dismiss all books on this account, however, because some students can handle such books.) Does the story encourage humor or compassion? Does it foster imagination or fascination? Remember, if you like the book, it is likely to be a winner for you and your sutdents.

But here's the surprise: once you favorably decide on a book, your job isn't over. There is no way you will be able to adequately articulate your fascination with the book when it eventually becomes number three in a quantity of a hundred or more. So you should sit right down and get in touch with your feelings immediately upon finishing reading and write what you feel. Remember, your objective is to interest your students: advertise the book and direct the ad to them in a style they will enjoy. (A warning: once finished reading a book, if you lay it aside because you don't presently have the time to write an ad for it, you may never get that feeling back.)

"Wait a minute!" I can hear some of you protesting, "what's wrong with letting the kid read the book's cover flap or the blurbs on the back?" My answer is that when one peruses such writing with the intended juvenile reader in mind the answer becomes clear. The overviews and quotes on a book's cover are too frequently not much help in creating an interest within the intended consumer. Too often the message is inadequately brief (which can also be said of juvenile book club blurbs), heavily (analytically) written, or seems to be addressing adults. And such writing is seldom provocative enough to use in introducing the book. Or, on the other hand, it might be quite deceptive: we've all read exciting ads for dull books. Of course, when the writing is superb and accurate it should be used. Most important of all, relying upon the book cover to advertise a book simply gives one another excuse not to become personally acquainted with the contents of many books for children.

Now that you are convinced, I hope, what you need next is "The Book Ad File." This will become an indispensable aid to student library visits, to SSR periods, and as a storytime or book-introducing resource for you. Some students will also enjoy writing ads for the books they have read. Simply include them in the file.

Just how broad your ad collection will be depends on your interest and your perception of the need to widen your students' reading fare. I suggest various genres be included (science fiction, fantasy, realistic fiction, biography, for examples), issues (death, drug use, dating, slavery, divorce, war, etc.), and informational books. A primary grade teacher will have a greater number of picture book ads that the intermediate and junior high teachers, who will probably have more realistic fiction ads.

On the back of each book-ad card could be recorded the book's theme(s) and ways the students can be helped to engage with the book as a class--often referred to as responding to literature.

Finally, to give a concrete idea of what I am writing about, here are some ads I have composed for a range of grades. I wrote them on 4"x6" cards, laminated them, and filed them by literature category, but others may wish to organize them differently or not at all. I often gather up a few of the books written about and hold them up to the class as I "advertise" them, reading the ads. You should see the hands shoot up!

SAY HELLO, VANESSA P
by Marjorie Sharmat

(Holiday House, 26 pages)

Vanessa is shy. Well,....maybe worse. She's scared. She won't say hello, she won't raise her hand in class, and she won't make friends. She's afraid if some DID notice her they might not LIKE her because....well, just because. Anyway, what makes her so important, she thinks, that anyone would want to be her friend?

In spite of this terrible feeling about herself, Vanessa does try to make friends....at times. But she fails. That is, until she lets the other children know something about herself that she knew all along.

There is a little (or a lot) of Vanessa in you and me. And that is why you will like this story.

(Picture Book: Realistic Fiction)

CHERNOWITZ! JHup
by Fran Arrick

(Bradbury Press, 165 pages)

"Cherno" isn't good enough. If you're Jewish, you've got to sound it. Not Cherno--Chernowitz. Like Horowitz. That way everybody knows you're a "Jew bastard" and "Christ killer." Who feels this way? Emmett Sundback, a ninth grade bully. Not too bright in most ways, but he's sure got it right--so he feels--about Jews.

Every day Bobby Cherno dreads going to school. Not only does he have to face the sneering comments of Emmett, but also his "gang"--students that used to be Bobby's friends. Finally, after over a year of torture, Bobby decides to fight back dirty--just like Emmett. He's going to get revenge.

A powerful story.

(Realistic Fiction)

ARE YOU THERE, GOD? IT'S ME, MARGARET. I-JH

by Judy Blume

(Dell paperback, 149 pages)

She was still flat....so she put cotton balls in her bra (why not?); she was about 12, but would she be the last of her friends to have her period? She wasn't any religion, but that didn't keep her from talking to God--even if she was upset with Him sometimes. Read about friendships, enemyships and "girl problems;" about Margaret Simon, but you'll probably see yourself, too.

(Realistic Fiction)

UNDERGROUND I/JHup

by David Macaulay

(Houghton Mifflin Co., 105 pages)

This book has been called "fascinating" and "one of the best books of the year" (and a lot more) by reviewers. What's so great about it?

For one thing, it shows the hidden world of the underground: how subway tunnels are constructed; what substructure preparation is needed before a building can be erected; and how and why the utility (electric, water, steam, gas, telephone, sewer and storm drainage) systems are built and laid out under city streets and sidewalks.

For another thing, it tells all this with simple language and drawings. You can't help but appreciate the conplex man-made underground network that is so essential to city life. You'll agree: it's fascinating.

(Informational)

MISS NELSON IS MISSING

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by Harry Allard & James Marshall

(Houghton Mifflin, 30 pages)

"Keep your mouths shut," said Miss Swamp.

"Sit perfectly still," said Miss Swamp.

"And if you misbehave, you'll be sorry," said Miss Swamp.

Well, the kids in Room 207 are the worst-behaved class in the whole school and now they've got just what they deserve: Miss Viola Swamp, a substitute and a real witch as far as the kids are concerned.

And what happened to sweet Miss Nelson, their regular teacher? The kids become so overworked, underloved and just plain miserable that they go hunting for her. But they can't find her. Is she missing? Not really. Is she hiding? Sort of. Just where will surprise you.

A fun book to read.

(Picture Book: Fanciful Humor)

WHICH WAY COURAGE

I/JHup

by Eiveen Weiman

(Atheneum, 130 pages)

Fourteen-year-old Courage is of an Old Order Amish family. And being Amish means one has to conform to a very strict way of life. The church community dictates much of what one can and cannot do: what to wear, what one can and cannot own, what job one can and cannot work at, and much more.

Courage, correctly named, can't agree with all that is expected of her--especially that she SHOULDN'T get a high school education and that she SHOULD ready herself for marriage at her age. She loves her family, but decides the only way out is to leave them--even though leaving means she will never be welcomed back.

This a tragic and moving story, but it happens.

(Realistic Fiction & Informational)

Short Shorts, ed. Irving Howe and Ilana Wiener Howe. New York: Bantam Books, 1984.

Reviewed by Daniel E. Arthur

After reading Short Shorts I have found it to be extremely entertaining, and one of the best anthologies I have ever read. It is refreshing to find an anthology with so many good foreign authors, including modern ones. It is also refreshing to find an anthology with so many diverse styles and messages. Teachers and students will find here many provocative pieces to read, to discuss, and to write about.

A useful added feature of the anthology is a short note on each of the authors, including their best works, nationality, etc. Following is my reaction to the stories and their authors.

"The Three Hermits" by Leo Tolstoy

This short short story is about a Bishop who, after hearing an old sailor tell of three religious hermits on a nearby island in the middle of the sea, decides to visit the island. There he finds that the three odd old men have a simple prayer they sing to the Lord. Not wanting them to remain uneducated about God, the Bishop teaches them about the Trinity, and helps them to memorize the Lord's prayer, because he says the three are willing, but not praying correctly.

Later, after the Bishop has left the small island and is back aboard his ship, he makes out some strange figure coming very fast after the ship. It is closing fast. To his surprise, the Bishop finds it is the three hermits, walking on the water without any motion. They have come to ask him to help them remember the Lord's Prayer, which they forgot as soon as they stopped repeating it. The Bishop simply tells them, after crossing himself: '"Your own prayer will reach the Lord, men of God. It is not for me to teach you. Pray for us sinners."'

Tolstoy could have written a novel. Instead he simply and succinctly illustrates his point that it is the will and the intent, not the manner, of praying to God which is important.

"Alyosha the Poet" by Tolstoy

This story is not a fable like Tolstoy's other tale in this collection, but is instead a vignette about a dutiful servant, who works hard his entire childhood, then dies from a fall just as he is becoming an adult. Tolstoy has a way of making us examine our relationships with others and the fairness of them. Tolstoy reminds me of a Russian Hemingway.

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"The Beggarwoman of Locarno" by Henrich Von Kleist

Von Kleist's style is very similar to Tolstoy's. His legend is similar to Tolstoy's vignette, in simplicity and in a story-telling kind of description. The story is a bit of real-life combined with a ghost, an interesting and enjoyable read.

"A Little Legend of the Dance" by Gottfried Keller

A more serious piece, this short story is also a fable, but becomes a little too heavy with heaven imagery for my tastes. Keller could learn something from Tolstoy--stay simple.

"After the Theatre" by Anton Checkov

Checkov's tale is a mini-masterpiece. He is able to capture the elusive quality of coquetry that a young woman of 16 feels at home within herself writing to three of her boy friends, all wanting her, trying to please her. His description of the girl's huge joy at having so much attention is something classically familiar (did I mention this is a wonderful story?!).

"The Wolf" by Giovanni Verga

Wow! Verga's work is potent, very potent. His tale here is different from the gentler stories presented so far. His story is one of lust, and of evil. Again, the setting and situation are simple, but the story grabs you and squeezes. Hard.

"An Episode of War" by Stephen Crane

This short story is one of Crane's war tales, a group of short stories commenting on and indicating real situations of war. Quite a change from Verga (I think the editors chose their story order carefully for emphasis). Crane depicts realism, unblemished, unromanticized. This story of how a man loses his arm is indicative of life in general; especially the way he is told by a surgeon, "`Nonsense man! . . . I won't amputate it.'"

"An Old Man" by Guy de Maupassant

de Maupassant is another master storyteller. He is careful here to make sure the reader understands that the major character in this work, an eighty-six year-old man, is obsessed with death, and afraid of it. The author's portrayal of this man's obsession with his health is an example of how a skilled writer can develop characterization in a short piece--excellent for teaching the concept.

"The Third Bank of the River" by Joao Giumaraes Rosa

This brilliant, metaphysical, esoteric tale by the Brazilian 20th century author Rosa reminds me of Gabriel Marquez's work. There is a sort of surrealistic feel to the story. Imagine a man who just suddenly, one day, decides to buy a small boat. Then imagine that man paddling his boat along a huge, lazy river. "What is so strange about that?" you say. Well, it is strange--if the man never comes back onto dry land, and paddles around on the river like a travelling hermit for the rest of his days. Wonderful, wonderful writer. I'm going to read more from this man. Again, this is an excellent short piece to teach.

"A Yom Kippur Scandal" by Sholom Aleichem

This tale is typical of Aleichem, a witty Jewish author, born in Russia in the mid-19th century. There is a warm, comical tone to Aleichem's writing. Pure fun to read, this tale also carries with it a surprise ending.

"If Not Higher" by I.L. Peretz

Peretz, a Yiddish author like Aleichem, also has a sense of humor. But his tale is more serious than Aleichem's. Both authors tend to deal with close, intimate stories of life in small Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, an eye-opening view of a kind of Jewish community that no longer exists.

"Eveline" by James Joyce

How marvelous for an author to be so recognizable in such a short work of fiction. Joyce's third person omniscient viewpoint allows great emotion to come across, yet a certain detachment also in his writing. He writes of real life, and of real conflicts. Excellent work to teach because of its compactness and exemplification of Joyce's style.

"A Sick Collier" by D. H. Lawrence

Lawrence's tale is similar to Joyce's, being about a common, real-life situation, a young woman who marries a coal miner, and what they experience in their life together. Lawrence effectively uses local dialect in the story to heighten realism.

"The Soft Touch of Grass" by Luigi Pirandello

I am amazed at the ability of some writers to pack so much intense information into just a few pages. (I notice that quite a few of these stories are archetypal.) Pirandello depicts the experience of a man who becomes impotent (metaphorically) through the loss of his wife, and as an old man, becomes a child again. Yet a quick incident in a park reminds him he can still be a man, if he wants to be.

"The Hunter Gracchus" by Franz Kafka

Kafka has always seemed to me to have a particular sense for the morbid--in this tale, the hunter Gracchus has somehow missed his boat to heaven and must sail the earth forever, dead. Only he has happened to sail near his hometown, and he longs to visit. He stops in the town, where they are expecting him.... an interesting tale. Kafka, Rosa, and Marquez all have something in common: a love of the unusual, a love of alternate situations from the normal; alternate realities, if you will.

"First Sorrow" by Kafka

An incredibly spoiled trapeze artist is isolated from society, much the same as the man in the canoe in Rosa's story. Again, Kafka deals here with a form of some alternate reality. He enjoys playing with realities, and illusion.

"The Untold Lie" by Sherwood Anderson

Anderson is best known for his collection of tales concerning Winesburg, Ohio. Anderson is a vivid realist, and his short fiction represents the American way of life in the early twentieth century.

"Paper Pills" by Anderson

This story is a short vignette about a very possible marriage between a young girl and a middle-aged doctor, who has the strange habit of writing his innermost thoughts on scraps of paper, then wadding them up into little balls and keeping them in his pockets. The style is similar to D. H. Lawrence's story about the collier in that both stories simply stop, without much resolution.

"A Clean, Well-lighted Place" by Ernest Hemingway

An interesting story about a bar; a special bar, that is "clean and well-lighted." A bar that is hospitable. The vocabulary is simple, as is typical of Hemingway, but something important is said about the condition of man, intimating that we are more alike than we may think, despite our ages and differences.

"Joy and the Law" by Giuseppe di Lampedusa

This work is a story of etiquette--about a poor clerk who gives a special cake he received for good work to a lawyer who does not need it, because the poor man owes the lawyer a favor.

(One thing I am noticing about all of these stories--they are fun!)

"Magic" by Katherine Anne Porter

A bizarre tale of a girl who is horribly treated by her female boss, then beaten and cast away into the streets, only to return happily because of an old magic recipe used by the Boss's cook. Sort of a cross between Marquez's mysticism and Alice Walker's bluntness.

"The Death of Dulgushov" by Isaac Babel

Babel reminds me of a Soviet Stephen Crane. He could easily be Crane's twin brother in Russia, writing about realism from the Soviet viewpoint. This story can be summarized by saying that "war is hell, but we keep on going anyway."

"The Bathhouse" by Mikhail Zoschenko

A humorous story about a poor Russian trying to take a bath. Good to read when you need to laugh at someone else (when you're too tired of laughing at yourself).

"The Use of Force" by William Carlos Williams

This tale shows just how vehemently a child can protest a doctor's examination of a potentially sore throat. Neat stuff! Very real. Williams effectively captures human emotion in his writing.

"Swaddling Clothes" by Yukio Mishima

This is a metaphysical tale, and also one about a mother's inner fears for her child. Excellent use of imagery. The Japanese setting adds greatly to a feeling of universality about the story--it could happen anywhere.

"If Grant Had Been Drinking at Appomattox" by James Thurber

A comical tale about what might have happened if Grant had been drinking...and confusedly handed his sword to Lee, instead of the other way around! Fun! Fun! (Calm yourself, Daniel; the semester's almost over.)

"Homage for Isaac Babel" by Doris Lessing

Wonderful story about a thirteen-year-old girl whose mother allows her to read an anthology by Babel. The mother, asked by her child why Babel is so famous and such a good writer, says it is because of his simplicity and economy of words.

The daughter, ironically enough, sends a letter from her private school thanking her mother, and in the most complex diction she can, tells her she will truly take to heart writing in a simple style!

"The Dead Man" by Jorge Luis Borges

In Borges' slow, detail-packed style, a story of survival unfolds in this tale. Borges does not placate the reader, he gives him life, without any illusions. And it is the life of survival in a tough South American world.

"In the Night" by Varlam Shalamov

Shalamov's tale is also about survival--but unlike Borges', it is about the kind of survival where you may not have enough to eat, versus two men vying for supremacy. The Russian dilemma is so beyond our experience, somehow I feel that we cannot truly understand it without having been born into the situation.

"The Blue Bouquet" by Octavio Paz

Ugh. How would you like to walk around a moonlit town at night, only to be accosted by a mugger who wants to make a bouquet--a bouquet of blue eyes, for his girlfriend. Thank God the character's eyes were (shudder) brown. Paz uses poignant description with fresh metaphors. I'm going to read more of his stuff.

"My Father Sits in the Dark" by Jerome Weidman

A story about a man who sits in the dark because there is a certain quality about the darkness that allows that man to be more alone and in touch with himself than at any other time--or in any other way. The father's boy discovers this idea, and feels relieved that nothing is wrong with his father. This tale might seem a bit odd, but I can really understand the father. Isn't that what good storytelling is all about?

"Wants" by Grace Paley

A story about a woman who represents a condition in society--a condition of dereliction of our dreams, which invades the minds of so many of us. This woman decides at the end of the story to change; or does she? Excellent writer. It's very difficult to capture the tone of a "real person" the way Paley does in this story. I can empathize with her as well as I can with the father in the last tale, perhaps more so, because the viewpoint is more personal.

"Bitterness for Three Sleepwalkers" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Like all of his fiction (that I have read so far), this tale has a surrealistic quality which makes the words almost drift on the page as you read them. Marquez sifts in convoluted allusions that would never appear anywhere except in his works. His writing is as distinctive as a fingerprint--yet elusive and often seemingly amorphous in meaning. Simple images next to highly complex images--never a direct, clear meaning that the reader can see right away. But the meaning is there. Sometimes in layers, sometimes in the sifting relationship of his syntax. This author is truly someone special. I would recommend "Innocent Erendira," published in a collection by the same name, or in his collected short stories. It's an utterly fascinating tale, of which an excellent movie has also been made.

(Have I mentioned yet that this anthology I am reviewing is superb?)

"The Eclipse" by Augusto Monterroso

A short, short, short story with a surprise twist--maybe Hank in Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court could pull the wool over the natives with an eclipse he knew about, but the protagonist here couldn't. (I don't know how much more of this fun I can stand. Are you sure this is supposed to be work?!?)

"The Laughter" by Heinrich Boll

Imagine, a man who laughs professionally--he ironically is always laughing, but admits at the end of this story that he has never truly laughed. A solemn man, he is incapable of laughing a laugh that is really his.

"News from the World" by Paula Fox

Fox writes an uneuphemised tale about a woman "falling in love with another man" on an island. Juxtaposed against this love story, there is a creeping image of oil in the sea around the tiny island where the woman lives, that draws closer and closer to the shore as the summer fades and it gets closer to the time when her lover must go. A serious story, more than entertainment, it is a good piece of literature.

"Going to Jerusalem" by Maria Luise Kaschnitz

Another tale with a surprise ending, this one is about a community inundated with a peculiar disease, and an odd man who makes waiting for the doctor just a little bit more bearable by playing a game. With its insightful ending, perhaps the story should be entitled: "Going to Jerusalem, Voodoo Style."

"The Censors" by Luisa Valenzuela

A bizarre little story about a censor who gets a job to intercept his own letter so it won't be censored, yet censors it anyway.

NCTE PAMPHLETS ON CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION AVAILABLE IN QUANTITY

The National Council of Teachers of English announces a new policy for quantity orders of its pamphlets on current issues in the teaching of English. Several of these publications state NCTE's positions and recommendations for action to pursue excellence in teaching and learning the English language arts.

Multiple copies of these pamphlets will now be available to state and local education agencies, parent groups, and other interested persons at a bulk rate of $5.00 per 100, prepaid only, from the Order Department, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

Single copies of each pamphlet continue to be available free. Requests should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope (business size). These pamphlets may be copied freely; no permission from NCTE is required. Among recent pamphlets covered by the new quantity order policy are

Incentives for Excellence: What School Board Members Can Do to Encourage Excellence in Their English Language Arts Programs. Five suggestions with steps for implementing them (Stock No. 22922)

Essentials of English: A Document for Reflection and Dialogue. States goals for student learning of language, literature, communication skills, and different modes of thinking (Stock No. 15942)

The Essentials of Education: A Call for Dialog and Action. Joint statement by NCTE and other education organizations on goals for education today (Stock No. 15934)

How to Help Your Child Become a Better Writer. Suggestions for parents; also available in a Spanish-language version (Stock No. 21667; Spanish: No. 07885)

Workload and the Teaching of Secondary School English. Background and recommendations from the NCTE Secondary Section Committee on teacher/student ratios for effective instruction (Stock No. 58242)

Guidelines for the Workload of the College English Teacher. Workload recommendations for English faculty at two- and four-year colleges, to ensure effective teaching (Stock No. 19913)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BRINGING THEM BACK ALIVE: VIRAGO MODERN CLASSICS

Nancy Mairs

When I was a major in English literature at a prestigious women's college in the early 1960's, I was required in four years of study to read one work by a woman: Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway. My husband, at the same time at a comparable men's college, must have fared rather better, for I recall borrowing the books he had used in a course on the novel, among them Maria Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent, Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho, and Fanny Burney's Evelina. And of course I stumbled upon a few women without benefit of academe--Jane Austen, the Brontes, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. But even now, toward the end of a doctoral program in an English department dedicated largely to the canonical theory of literature ("It's all right to read works by women," one of my professors told me, "after you're familiar with the canon," meaning clearly the works by men which male critics have deemed enduring), I am still struggling to correct my deficiencies, guided by the increasingly substantial body of feminist criticism that has developed since I was an undergraduate, and aided by the willingness of publishers to print and reprint the literature of women.

No doubt other teachers have had similar experiences. Educated in patriarchal institutions (and, at least until recently, even women's colleges have been patriarchal institutions; many still are), they have learned to think of works by men as the norm, the canon as I have called it, which establishes literary merit. If they have asked, "Where are the women?" they may have been told that there just aren't many--or at least not many important ones. "But wait," some may have said, as I finally did. "Importance is an ascribed, not an innate, characteristic." Realizing that reading lists at both the high-school and the college level are skewed in favor of male texts, and that this bias infects the very way students are taught to look at the world, they may have set themselves the task of incorporating women's works into the curriculum: only to find that there really aren't very many, by comparison with works by men.

The Dial Press has made this task immensely easier by bringing out a series (twenty titles are listed in the catalogue I have, and I hope that the Press plans more) of "enduring works by women novelists" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries under the rubric Virago Modern Classics. At first I was startled by this title--virago has such pejorative overtones. But of course a virago need not be a termagant: She may be any unusually strong and courageous woman, and it is doubtless this co-opting of "masculine" virtues which led to the negative usage. At any rate, this richly ambiguous word seems peculiarly apt for these women who preempted the male prerogative of the pen and wrote works that, although largely overlooked by canonical critics, are

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strikingly strong, individual, and durable.

Of the three Virago Modern Classics I have read so far, Radclyffe Hall's *The Unlit Lamp* is the least satisfactory. Its inclusion in the series seems necessitated by psychological and sociological rather than aesthetic considerations; important as an early (and non-sensational) treatment of lesbian love, it is a heavy-handed piece, the characters and events so overdrawn that when Joan Ogden, after endless vacillation, chooses to remain in the company of her silly and manipulative mother rather than escape to independence and fulfilment with her intelligent, charming, and beautiful friend Elizabeth, one tends to conclude that her wasted life serves her right. The tensions created by this triangle, handled subtly, promise enormous power; under Hall's programmatic treatment, however, the situation never transcends a kind of clumsy allegory. I cannot imagine using *The Unlit Lamp* in the classroom, though I would find a place for it on the school library shelf.

Mary Webb's *Precious Bane* is a subtler work, despite its straightforward episodic structure and pat ending, the heroine swept into her lover's arms and borne to safety on his swift charger. Set in Shropshire in the early nineteenth centure, the novel more than offsets these flaws in its portrayal of Prue Sarn, whose body is disfigured by a hare lip, and her brother Gideon, whose soul is warped by a lust for wealth. Prue, "hare-shotten" though she is, works with the stamina of a man and has learned to read and write; and these capabilities, combined with her deformity, earn her (as so many women before her) a reputation as a witch, but also the love of the weaver Kester Woodgreaves. The book is particularly remarkable for its vivid use of rustic customs and superstitions and its depiction of the Shropshire countryside with such close attention to detail that the land becomes a living entity; these qualities weave the events together in a tight, dark tapestry against which the strands of Prue's courage and love glitter. Because Webb uses Shropshire dialect, the language is somewhat difficult; but good readers should find much in Prue's experience to challenge their thinking.

Barbara Comyns's *The Vet's Daughter* is by far the strangest and most troubling of the three. The syntax and details of the first couple of pages are so odd that I thought I was reading a dream sequence from which I would wake momentarily; but the dream is inexorable and dreadful, and one wakes from it only through death. The figure of young Alice Rowlands, her mother dying, then dead, her father alternately neglectful and brutal, literally floats through a series of painful events that culminates in a release as bizarre and stirring as any I've read. Despite its Gothic elements, however, this is no mere thriller; rather, it is a small masterpiece (Mistresspiece? damn this patriarchal language anyway) of close psychological observation told as Emily Dickinson would have it, "slant." Because of its brevity and poignancy, even average readers should respond well to *The Vet's Daughter*; more advanced students would be engaged by its symbolic possiblities.

The most intriguing common element in these three novels is the deviation of each central character from feminine conventions. Joan Ogden the lesbian, "hare-shotten" Prue Sarn, Alice Rowlands the levitator are all outsiders, whose differentness prevents them from participating in ordinary ways in the activities--romantic attachment, marriage, and motherhood for the most part--literature has assigned to women. Moreover, they are not merely unusual characters, whose well-delineated idiosyncrasies mark them the creations of skillful writers; far more important, they are subverters of the partriarchal order. Whether through homoeroticism, physical deformity, literacy, or psychic capacity, they disrupt that order, scatter it, and suggest that the truth of women's lives may be of another order altogether.

Such a possibility merits scrutiny and criticism in the classroom. Students--both male and female--deserve more than simple indoctrination into the ways of their fathers. They deserve, in fact, to learn how to identify, examine, and evaluate the assumptions upon which their personal and cultural views are grounded. Close reading of female texts can sharpen these skills by raising issues that otherwise remain embedded in a primarily patriarchal language and literature.

In publishing Virago Modern Classics, The Dial Press is doing the general reader a great service by retrieving works by women which have been allowed to languish and even vanish while the works of their male contemporaries--Thomas Hardy, D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster, Ford Madox Ford, John Fowles, to name just a few--have become part of the canon. Furthermore, with their shiny black covers decorated with details from modern paintings and their elegant typefaces, they are such handsome editions that they make you long to have one of each in your own library and to buy them up for gifts to good friends. But Dial is serving the school librarian and the teacher as well in providing them new options by making available, in a rugged and appealing format, works of serious literary merit to which students have had no access before.

TEACHING MARK TWAIN'S PUDD'NHEAD WILSON

Robert C. Rosen

Critical evaluation and interpretation of The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson have been as confusing and contradictory as the novel itself at times can seem. Contemporary reviewers disagreed fundamentally: one called it "in point of construction . . . much the best story that Mark Twain has written"; another saw it as "not much credit" to its author's skill as a novelist, its story "at times rambl[ing] on in an almost incomprehensible way." The years since may have brought a general consensus and many pronouncements on Pudd'nhead Wilson as a powerful, important novel, decidedly worth studying; but an underlying uncertainty persists, reflected in the almost contorted way in which critics often praise it: to Malcolm Bradbury, it is a "bad book with a good book inside it struggling to get out, and in the end remarkably managing to do so"; to Leslie Fiedler, it "is, after all, a fantastically good book, better than Mark Twain knew or his critics have deserved."[1]

Much of this critical uneasiness derives, I suspect, from uncertainty about just what Twain is saying in Pudd'nhead Wilson, or whether he is saying anything at all. To Philip S. Foner, the novel "demonstrates the fraud and myth of racial superiority"; to Bradbury, it is an "ironic treatment of the fate of man confronted with an unaccommodating universe." To Fiedler, again but in a later discussion, it is "an almost diagrammatic study in black and white," while to Warner Berthoff, its symbolism of "black and white, guilt and innocence . . . composes . . . no clear meaning."[2]

All this argues not that we need a re-evaluation and new critical interpretation of Pudd'nhead Wilson--I, at least, have little new to add here--but rather that we ought to teach the novel, at least as readily as we teach the more popular and undeniably better Huckleberry Finn. The often puzzling nature of Pudd'nhead Wilson can draw students into actively working to figure it out, and since definitive answers do not exist--the critics certainly provide none--vigorous disagreement is bound to enliven any classroom discussions, particularly given the novel's controversial themes. Discussion, with no predetermined conclusions, of whether a novel succeeds or fails, whether it is coherent or confused, whether it means many things or not quite anything, can help students discover a great deal about the complexity of writing and reading literature.

Writing assignments can be an important part of a unit on Pudd'nhead Wilson. Especially valuable are short in-class assignments--ten or twenty minutes of ungraded writing during which students can focus their thinking on an issue and discover and develop their ideas. Such opportunities to think on paper invariably lead to livelier and more intelligent class discus-

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sions. In the course of my own discussion of the novel below, I suggest a number of in-class writing topics--any of which, of course, could equally well be assigned as homework--and at the end I offer a paper topic that ties together the questions about Pudd'nhead Wilson that the in-class writings raise. Writing about it will help make students active and critical readers of this complex novel.

* * *

One thing, at least, is clear: Pudd'nhead Wilson attacks racism and slavery. The novel opens with a dreamy, idyllic description which only heightens our awareness of Dawson's Landing, Missouri as "a slaveholding town,"[3] and Twain's very last words remind us of the cruelty of the fate slaves frequently faced: being sold "down the river" (226). Throughout, it confronts us with ironic--even sarcastic--juxtapositions, revelations of the shallowness and hypocrisy of the code of "honor" of the gentlemen slaveholders of Dawson's Landing,[4] as well as with Twain's own editorializing references to matters such as the "two centuries of unatoned insult and outrage" (109) that blacks have faced.

Readers, students, expect then that the main plot line of Pudd'nhead Wilson will, as it unfolds, make this same point, even carry most of the burden of the novel's attack on slavery and the racist beliefs that feed on and sustain it. We expect that Roxy's switching of the two all but indistinguishable babies--one white, the other (her son) one thirty-second black--will precipitate a chain of events that will expose the lie of racial inferiority, will reveal "the Negro" as primarily a social, not a biological construct. After all, slavery, not nature, has created a distinct, inferior group, as even Tom himself suspects when, in a brief moment of awareness after learning Roxy is his mother, he wonders why "this awful difference [is] made between white and black" (117). The artificiality of the great distinctions made between races becomes obvious when we see how "naturally" Chambers, the actual white child, assumes the role of slave, and how easily (and Tom's existence is a perpetual reminder of this) the color line, as Fiedler puts it, has been "crossed and recrossed by the white man's lust."[5]

In order to understand the problems Twain runs into later in the novel, students need to be fully aware of the expectations its beginning creates. When they have read the first three chapters (and no more), ask them to write about how the novel criticizes slavery and where they think the plot will go next, what the consequences of switching the babies will be. These short essays can be read aloud and discussed; speculation and debate about what will happen next will heighten students' interest in reading on.

The exchange of babies certainly seems like the beginning of an experiment perfectly designed to prove, as Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar states, that "training is everything" (84). We anticipate that just as Chambers will grow up a typical slave, Tom will become a typical Southern gentleman, clear demonstration that no essential difference exists between the races. However, Tom is no gentleman, Southern or otherwise, but rather the most loathsome of characters. Weak, vain, dishonest, brutal, willing even to sell his own mother down the river, Tom is villainous almost beyond belief, certainly far more villainous than other whites in the novel and thus beyond the power of his corrupting training as a master to explain. Henry Nash Smith is right, of course--that experience corrupts the master "by encouraging cruelty toward the human beings he is taught to regard as animals, and thus by blunting his sensibilities and fostering an unwarranted pride of place." Smith buttresses the argument that training makes Tom what he is with a quote from an earlier version of the novel, from a passage in which Twain editorializes about Tom's behavior in abusing Chambers: "Humane young men were quite capable of it, good-hearted young fellows who would protect with their lives a dog that was being treated so. Slavery was to blame, not innate nature. It placed the slave below the brute, without the white man's realizing it."[6] Twain may be right about slavery, but *within the action of the novel* Tom's behavior is still extraordinary, still exceptional. Other citizens of Dawson's Landing--Judge Driscoll and even the smug and callous Percy Northumberland Driscoll, butt of Twain's angry satire--do not approach Tom in villainy. His character calls out for other explanations.

Once students have become aware of this problem, they should write about it. Tom's villainy is quickly revealed in Chapter 4, but a teacher should give students time for it to sink in and give them a chance to hear and to try out a variety of explanations as they read. Halfway or two-thirds into the novel, ask them to write on *why* Tom is so evil. The debate that follows will probably not provide a definitive answer but rather just emphasize the difficulty and the importance of this question.

Students may conclude, with Roxy, that Tom is so evil because he is black, that "Ain't nigger enough in him to show in his finger-nails . . . yit dey's enough to paint his soul" (158)? Twain's own mention of Tom's "native viciousness" (79) is certainly at best ambiguous. To Philip S. Foner, Twain appears unfortunately "to be swallowing the spurious 'blood will tell' doctrine"; to Gladys Carmen Bellamy, "Tom's essential difference from the white boy shows that human nature is not the same."[7] But this conclusion is too much at odds with Twain's other writings, including *Huckleberry Finn*, and, more to the point, with so much of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* itself, especially its satirical attacks on the slaveholding pseudo-aristocrats of Dawson's Landing, whose preoccupation with heredity--Roxy's pride in her descent from "ole Cap'n John Smith" and "Pocahontas de Injun queen" (157-158)--seems to parody.

Students may try out other interpretations. Perhaps Tom, a troublesome baby "from the very beginning of his usurpation" (75), was simply spoiled, more so than others of his position and race; Roxy, his mom as well as his mammy, was after all "a doting fool of a mother" (77). Yet this is hardly "native viciousness." Perhaps, then, Tom is simply not to be understood realistically, but instead functions symbolically: "an instrument of vengeance," as James M. Cox puts it,[8] he kills Judge Driscoll, symbolic head of Dawson's Landing, in return for years of oppression of its black inhabitants. Or perhaps Pudd'nhead Wilson is just a deeply flawed novel, Tom's "unmotivated melodramatic villainy" the result of the novel's "infection by stereotypes from popular fiction and the theater."[9]

If students try to imagine the choices and problems Twain faced as he constructed his novel, they can see that he could not have made Tom an average, decent, proper Southern gentleman in order to prove blacks as good as whites, for the simple reason that, to Twain, there was little decent or proper about such gentlemen. To prove blacks the equals of whites by having Tom grow up the equal of any slaveowner would hardly do in a novel devoted to satirizing the shallowness, smugness, and frequent hypocrisy of Dawson's Landing's leading citizens. What Twain did instead--his decision to make a villain of Tom--led, of course, to numerous unresolved critical questions, questions that students can learn a great deal by struggling with. One useful though difficult assignment, once students have finished the novel, is for them to construct a plot based on the exchange of a black and a white baby that would make the argument Twain seems to be trying to make. Ask students, perhaps working in groups, to write a one-page outline of a plot to substitute for Twain's.

Pudd'nhead Wilson also offers students the challenge of developing an interpretation that unifies seemingly disparate elements. Most obvious, perhaps, is the question of the thematic relation to Tom's story of what Maxwell Geismar calls "the irrelevant Italian twins,"[10] Angelo and Luigi Capello, whose tale takes up a far greater part of the novel than their role in Tom's life--the kicking incident, Luigi's duel with Judge Driscoll, their accusation in the murder Tom himself committed--seems to warrant. Are they simply a reflection of Twain's irresistable attraction to duality?[11] Or an unfortunate vestige of the novel's origin in Twain's Siamese twins farce, "Those Extraordinary Twins"?[12] Robert Rowlette suggests the twins in Pudd'nhead Wilson serve to highlight "the coercive power of training," as the citizens of Dawson's Landing react to them with an awe based on "received opinion," not the evidence before them. Henry Nash Smith suggests that, very different yet intimately connected, the twins parallel Tom's own divided heritage, his white slaveowning father and his black slave mother; the "psychological equivalent" of twins, Tom is "two persons in one,"[13] a black who appears white, legally a slave but temporarily free.

The final incident in "Those Extraordinary Twins," in which a mob, angry at Luigi, hangs him, thus killing Angelo too, appears in the novel as Wilson's joking wish that he owned half of an annoying dog so he could kill his half. This suggests that the most important "twins" in Pudd'nhead Wilson, the real parallel to Angelo and Luigi, are Chambers and Tom, and that the humanity of one cannot be trampled upon without equal damage to the other. As Kenneth S. Lynn asks, "Is the human race any more divisible than a dog?"[14]

This sheds more light on the origin of Pudd'nhead Wilson in

"Those Extraordinary Twins" than on the role of the twins in the novel. It suggests also that Twain may have erred in separating the Siamese twins, for human connectedness--and the perils of denying it--are what Tom's story is so deeply about. Finally, it seems, Twain may simply have not fully integrated his original tale into his novel; certainly many critical problems remain for students to work on. If they have read "Those Extraordinary Twins," students can speculate, in writing, on how *Pudd'nhead Wilson* developed out of it and can discuss whether or not it developed far enough. If they have not read the tale, they can write arguing whether the story of Angelo and Luigi adds to or detracts from the novel.

Equally open for student discovery and debate is the significance of Pudd'nhead Wilson, the thematic relationship between his story--his climb from disparaged outcast to hero of Dawson's Landing--and Tom's. Twain himself referred to Wilson as both the novel's "chiefest" character and also as a mere plot device, "a piece of machinery," not a character at all.[15] As the novel's title character, why does Wilson remain so sketchy and elusive? And why--given the tragedy of Tom, the scarcely told but perhaps greater tragedy of Chambers (who, at the end, is alienated from both black and white communities), and the larger social tragedy of slavery in general--why, then, did Twain title his novel *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson*?[16] Is his tragedy simply, as Warner Berthoff suggests, the initial "democratic victimization"[17] that soured Wilson and led to his pessimistic and cynical Calendar, a reflection of Twain's own tragic mood in his later years? Asking students to write in defense of the title Twain chose, or else to choose a title of their own and defend *it*, will help motivate a discussion of such questions.

Wilson's ultimate triumph, the trial at which he reveals the truth about Tom's crimes and about his identity, is fraught with contradiction and irony. True, he finally succeeds, after more than twenty years, in gaining the respect of the townspeople; but the whole thrust of the novel--from the failure of Wilson's initial joke through Twains's repeated attacks on the slaveowners' moral blindness--demonstrates how little these townspeople and their respect are worth. And the trial itself does not even bring justice. Tom's indictment, as James M. Cox writes, is "more disturbing than gratifying," and his being sold down the river to pay the creditors of his owner's estate makes it all too clear that this very dramatic trial has identified an individual criminal but left untouched the greater social crime of slavery. As Leslie Fiedler shrewdly points out, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* ironically inverts the archetypal detective story, in which the guilt of a single criminal establishes the innocence of the community. (Students might be asked to write on whether Wilson was morally right or wrong in exposing Tom as the criminal--and as black.) Perhaps the real tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson--a tragedy he shows little awareness of--is, ironically, that all his analytic powers are, as Kenneth S. Lynn suggests, powerless to change social reality, "powerless to compete against the accumulated weight of history."[18]

Ironies certainly run through *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, often quite puzzling ironies, that challenge the reader to figure out just what Twain is trying to say. When Judge Driscoll, for example, is told that Tom, rather than honorably challenging Luigi to a duel for having kicked him, instead took him to court, Driscoll's friend Pembroke Howard comforts the Judge by saying, "You know it's a lie as well as I do, old friend. He is of the best blood of the Old Dominion" (141). At least three ironies are working at once here: that Tom is *not* of the best blood, since he is one thirty-second black, enough in Driscoll's eyes to make him Negro, and thus inferior; that "the best blood" hardly guarantees virtue, as so much of the novel works to point out; and that the code of honor that glorifies duelling is rather ludicrous, a satirical butt in the novel. These clustered ironies--typical of many throughout the book--do not cohere in any obvious way, do not seem to make a unified point, but appear rather to contradict each other, almost to cancel each other out. Asking students to write a paragraph or two sorting out the meanings and deciding whether Twain is saying something very complex very cleverly or simply lacks complete control over his material can provide them with a valuable exercise in close reading.

This hardly exhausts the unresolved questions (and possible writing exercises) *Pudd'nhead Wilson* gives rise to. What, for example, are the relationships--if any--of Wilson's Calendar aphorisms to the chapters which they introduce, and to the novel as a whole? Do they simply generalize to all of humanity the pessimism and cynicism Twain expresses concerning the inhabitants of Dawson's Landing? Or is there some more detailed connection between Calendar and narrative? And does the novel successfully integrate--or does it simply throw together--farcical and serious, comic and tragic elements? And what of the characterization of Roxy? Does she, as Arthur G. Pettit suggests, change roles "with bewildering speed"? Is she the product of Twain's own "color confusion"?[19] Or is she, as Henry Nash Smith writes, the novel's "only fully developed character," this because her "subversive threat to the dominant culture" is the only thing in the novel that truly "stirs Mark Twain's imagination"?[20] Does her sexual vitality--and the contrasting asexuality of the white female characters--contribute to the novel's meaning, or simply reflect Twain's own unconscious feelings?[21]

However many (or few) in-class writings students do on *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the following concluding assignment (or something like it) will help them review the many questions the novel raises and unify what they have learned:

> Suppose it is the early 1890s, you are a reader at a publishing house, and you have received *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* as a manuscript submitted for publication. Suppose the author--A.T. Armwink--has published nothing, is an unknown. Write a five-page reader's report in which you either: 1) explain why the novel should be published as is; 2) explain why the novel should be rejected; or 3) explain to the author *why and how* the novel should be rewritten (in order to be resubmitted for publication). The publishing house you work for is committed to working with writers,

helping them to develop, so option 3 is the most desirable.

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According to Joseph Comprone, "critical theory tells us that serious authors strive to disorient and disconcert readers as they read, providing them with premises and perspectives that become platforms upon which contradictory ideas and experiences are then erected, and new theories and attitudes are built."[22] Certainly, Pudd'nhead Wilson does this, whether Twain himself strove to do it or not; and the disorientation continues even as we try to interpret the novel we have read. This can drive students into an active involvement, a continuous wrestling with the text, that may teach them more about how literature works than a definitive analysis of a flawless novel. And for all its puzzles, there is something very powerful about Pudd'nhead Wilson--it strikes somehow to the heart of the issues of racism and slavery--that makes us want to keep trying to figure it out.

Notes

[1] William Livingston Alden, rev. of Pudd'nhead Wilson, Idler (August 1894), rpt. in Frederick Anderson, ed., Mark Twain: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 182; rev. of Pudd'nhead Wilson, Athenaeum (19 January 1895), rpt. in Anderson, ed., Critical Heritage, p. 183; Malcolm Bradbury, Intro. to Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins (New York: Penguin, 1969), p. 9; Leslie Fiedler, "As Free as Any Cretur. . .," New Republic (15 August 1955 and 22 August 1955), quoted in Robert Rowlette, Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson": The Development and Design (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1971), p. viii.

[2] Philip S. Foner, Mark Twain: Social Critic (New York: International Publishers, 1958), p. 211; Bradbury, p. 16; Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, rev. ed. (New York: Stein and Day, 1975), p. 403; Warner Berthoff, The Ferment of Realism: American Literature, 1884-1919 (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 72.

[3] Mark Twain, Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins (New York: Penguin, 1969), p. 57. Page numbers for subsequent references to this edition will be given parenthetically in the text.

[4] Percy Northumberland Driscoll, Twain writes, "was a fairly humane man toward slaves and other animals; he was an exceedingly humane man toward the erring of his own race" (66).

[5] Fiedler, Love and Death, p. 405.

[6] Henry Nash Smith, Mark Twain: The Development of a Writer (New York: Atheneum, 1974), pp. 174, 180. Albert E. Stone, Jr. argues similarly in The Innocent Eye: Childhood in Mark Twain's Imagination (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 194.

[7] Foner, p. 213; Gladys Carmen Bellamy, Mark Twain as a

Literary Artist (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), p. 319.

[8] James M. Cox, Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 241.

[9] Smith, p. 180.

[10] Maxwell Geismar, Mark Twain: An American Prophet (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), p. 137.

[11] See Justin Kaplan, Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), pp. 101-102.

[12] The Penguin edition of Pudd'nhead Wilson reprints "Twins" also, and students can enjoy speculating about how it evolved into the finished novel; Twain's own explanation, included with "Twins," is neither complete nor entirely serious. Anne P. Wigger tells far more than Twain, in "The Composition of Mark Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins: Chronology and Development," Modern Philology 55 (November 1957): 93-102. See also Daniel Morley McKeithan, The Morgan Manuscript of Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson", Essays and Studies on American Language and Literature, No. 12 (Uppsala, Sweden: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokandeln, 1961).

[13] Rowlette, p. 79; Smith, p. 174.

[14] Kenneth S. Lynn, Mark Twain and Southwestern Humor (Boston: Little, Brown, 1959), pp. 263-64.

[15] Twain to Fred Hall, 12 December 1892, quoted in Rowlette, p. 103; Twain to Olivia Langdon Clemens, 12 January 1894, quoted in Smith, p. 181.

[16] The first edition is titled Pudd'nhead Wilson: A Tale (London: Chatto and Windus, 1894), but the first American edition, which includes the farcical "Twins," is titled The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson and The Comedy Those Extraordinary Twins (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Company, 1894).

[17] Berthoff, p. 73.

[18] Cox, p. 228; Fiedler, Love and Death, p. 409; Lynn, p. 268.

[19] Arthur G. Pettit, Mark Twain and the South (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), p. 149. See also Cox, pp. 241-44.

[20] Smith, p. 179.

[21] On this, see Lynn, pp. 265-67; Cox, pp. 229-32; and Pettit, pp. 150-54.

[22] Joseph Comprone, "Literature and the Writing Process: A Pedagogical Reading of William Faulkner's 'Barn Burning'," College Literature 9 (Winter 1982): 6.

TEACHING STUDENTS TO INTELLIGENTLY FEEL LITERATURE

Mark Allister

Recently I asked a colleague how he was teaching his freshman-course, called "Writing about Literature"; he replied that his approach is to make his students "little Formalists" through "close readings." His concerns are that students nowadays lack the tools for literary discussion--they don't know the terminology; their thinking is not rigorous enough; they want to talk about personal reactions rather than engaging in close reading. Most instructors, when teaching a reading/writing course, use some sort of close reading approach, but we pay too high a price for what we get. Students often learn to pursue reading and writing about literature as if they were solving a math problem: they read the entire problem, discover what is wanted, extract information necessary to the solution, and then work out steps in a particular order until they come to the answer. Once arrived at an answer, they shut the door (the book) on that problem forever. It matters not to them, except as homework finished, except as getting it right.

My approach to teaching a reading/writing course is to open up personal experience in early drafts of papers as a method to engage students, to help them discover their own subjects for writing, and to enable them to explore the relationship between literature and life. Doing multiple explorations, in writing, of the same literary text, students proceed from examining their own experience reading a text to giving in later drafts an analysis of the story or poem--a method that in the end, I believe, produces writers better able to compose critical papers. The theoretical framework comes from reader-response critical theory and recent research in reading; pedagogically, I am attacking "themetalk" in writing and, to push it further, in thinking. I want students to become active, committed, vibrant participators with literature, and so I give them the opportunity to become "composers" in reading and in writing.

When students are drilled to use proper literary terminology (irony, ambiguity, persona, etc.), to develop an overall thesis for a paper, and to use supporting details from the text, writing a paper often becomes an exercise meant only for the English classroom. As an example of prose that seems to be only "exercise," early last quarter in my "Writing about Literature" course, a student wrote the following opening paragraph as a critical response to Kate Chopin's "Beyond the Bayou":

> The story, "Beyond the Bayou," is a modern day parable of the post-civil war era. On the surface it seems like a story that only deals with the problem of overcoming fear. However the setting and the characters draw the reader to a higher level of understanding. It is a very short story but in its brevity the meaning is

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not lost in many insignificant incidents.

Several years ago, I probably would have responded to Mike's paragraph by commenting on the lack of capitalization for Civil War, the awkwardness of the final sentence, and the lack of a thesis statement (several potential topics are suggested here, but where this paper will go is unclear). Instead, I discussed with Mike his stance in relation to the story, and the tone resulting from that stance.

Mike, as a high school senior, had gone through his school's Advanced Placement program, taken and passed the standardized test, and obtained university credits. He'd had an excellent background in discussing and writing on literature, he told me; he talked about his "A. P. [advanced placement] style": sharp, critical, always assertive. What he valued in his writing, I objected to the most. His condescending, authoritative voice reflected a writer "trained" to be specific, logical; and a reader trained to look for "hidden meanings" that support the overall theme of the work (which in most cases, only The Teacher can articulate). What prompted my strong reaction were Mike's statements that a story might "only deal with the problem of overcoming fear," as if such a theme would be minor, and that some stories he reads have their meanings lost in insignificant incidents. Some of you, at this point, might say that these are only slips on Mike's part, or that his writer's "pose" is of little importance, or just a pose for this paragraph or paper. I believe, however, that something great is at stake. How Mike uses language as a response to this story dictates how he understands the text--and his world, by extension. His attitude expressed through writing becomes his attitude; or as William Coles maintains in The Plural I, we project "selves" through our writing, and eventually our self becomes an amalgam of the selves with which we articulate, and therefore understand, the world.[1]

I objected also, when talking to Mike, to his third sentence, "However the setting and the characters draw the reader to a higher level of understanding," a representative example of student writing which is unengaged and sounds the way students think teachers want them to sound--what Coles calls "themetalk," Roger Sale "canned talk," Ken Macrorie "Engfish." Certainly, Mike competently manipulates the language and is an experienced reader, compared to other freshmen. But whether he writes the themetalk correctly or not, or understands what it is to give a reading of a story or poem--neither matters much. What Mike demonstrates with his paper on "Beyond the Bayou," and what many students are learning in reading/writing courses, is something which will have little bearing on them, as a person or student, the minute they walk out of class.

What I am most concerned about is that students not read a literary text as if it were a textbook from which they garner information, an attitude which causes them to consider the text merely a problem to be solved correctly. To write well and to learn from literature, students need to care about stories and poems, need to believe that literature matters to them outside of the classroom. To construct a teaching approach which undermines the process of "information retrieval," I turned to recent developments in critical theory, specifically the radical reader-response criticism.

Though the particular theoretical orientation of reader-response critics--whether phenomenology, psychoanalysis, structuralism, or deconstruction--shapes their definitions of reader and text, what they have in common is the wish to abolish the text's objectivity and to abolish the possibility of a definitive critical reading.[2] Wolfgang Iser says that the reader's role is to be co-creator of a text, that a reader's imagination fills in the "gaps" inherent in the structure of any text. Stanley Fish, describing the role a reader plays because of the sequence of decisions, revisions, anticipations, reversals, and recoveries the reader performs while "negotiating" a text, concludes that meaning is not something one extracts from the text, but an experience the reader has while reading. Likewise, literature loses its objectivity and becomes a sequence of events that unfold within the reader's mind; and literary criticism becomes the description of this act of reading.

For a final comment on reader-response criticism, I turn to Louise Rosenblatt, who distinguishes between two purposes for reading, two positions that a reader may take toward a text: efferent and aesthetic.[3] Readers approaching a text "efferently" look only for information; those approaching a text "aesthetically" concern themselves "with what happens during the actual reading event.... In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during this relationship with a particular text."[4] Teaching Formalist principles rigidly, an instructor discounts, even if only implicitly, any "aesthetic" experience: students must treat the text as object, not as event; if we have students write on their reading experience, we just invite "impressionist," silly-because-personal papers.

I want those impressionistic papers, silly or not, because I revive and nourish an often-forgotten issue: the relationship of literature to life--that literature is life, only in words, with the kind of order that writing gives. When students read Joyce's "Araby," they can empathize with the boy, remember back to when they had similar crushes. Most students also remember, with a little prodding, a sudden illumination when they realized something about their own foolishness. Yet we, as leaders of class discussion and arbiters of how papers are written, close off personal experience to get at what we consider more important: Joyce's use of language, the images of the boy as a knight, the squalor and oppressiveness of the environment, or the technical aspect of the narration. Reading literary texts and writing on them is interesting because of what unique individuals have to say; as Young, Becker, and Pike put it in Rhetoric: Discovery and Change: "Human differences are the raw material of writing--differences in experiences and ways of segmenting them, differences in values, purposes, and goals."[5] It is these differences, crude and unsophisticated as they often are for freshmen, that I cultivate and want students to explore.

The past decade's research in reading lends credence to an instructor's encouraging divergent and idiosyncratic responses to literary texts.[6] Comprehension is no longer seen remotely as an "objective" process; _what_ and _how_ depend upon an individual reader's "model of reality," or "schema." Reading for any individual becomes a unique process of composing, based on the reader's feelings, experiences, and knowledge, and on the context of reading. We know this through common sense, and the experience, for example, of seeing a movie and disagreeing heartily with our companion afterwards on what was accomplished and how. Usually we respect differing views, if we respect our companion. We often forget, however, that freshmen experience literature in their own particular ways, and that we should respect their articulations of what they understand. We might subconsciously believe that they have to "grow up" before they know enough of life to have a model of reality that allows them to understand complex literature. Yet we undermine their attempts to grow _through_ literature, by closing off personal experience in a response.

In student papers, I look for an engaged thinker who writes with a personal voice. To encourage such a response, and to help students grow through literature, I have them in early drafts link details from the text with their own experiences. For the first assignment, students are to write on one of a number of prescribed stories or poems (which we will never discuss in class), using the following guideline as a topic:

> First, describe scenes, characters, events, or passages from the story or poem which stand out to you. Don't feel that you need to describe what seems important for an understanding of the text, but what seems important to _you_. Where is your attention really "grabbed"? Second, try to explain why you were "grabbed by" whatever you described in part one. Look into your own life and mind for the reasons. Third, what associations follow from part two; meaning, what do you think of next, what do you recall from your life if you recollect longer about these matters? Why?[7]

This guideline becomes known as the "rough draft guideline"--at least once a week students use it to write on a new story or poem.

Used over and over, this guideline comes to function as a heuristic. With it, students can compose a paper about both the text and their experience reading it, and can reflect why they are having a particular experience. The attention, at this stage, is not on students giving a coherent, detailed "reading" of a literary text, but rather on themselves as readers. I want the students, through recall, to monitor their reading to see when the "blip" jumps higher, to see when they are "with" the writer and when their attention lessens. If students are allowed to pursue the moments of greatest interest, both within the text and within their own lives, they write with more involvement, think harder, realize the importance of what they do--all of which promotes greater exploration of a text and more care in their writing.

The "rough draft guideline" has great flexibility and is open-minded, for just this purpose. Students must develop their own subjects, which doesn't happen often enough. We know that we work best when we have chosen our own subjects for scholarship. Anything different would seem strange to us, but we don't give our freshmen the same choices, or the chance to discover their own interests, presumably because we believe that they might not think of suitable subjects. I am interested in allowing them to do so, not in dictating the terms on which a story or poem can be addressed.

The first time that the students use the guideline they usually fall into the style and form which I am urging them to move from: the "five-paragraph theme" in which they uncommittedly in thematalk attempt a reading of the entire story or poem, and deal almost exclusively in generalities. Writing about themselves as readers, using an "I" in a paper (for heaven's sake, can I do that?), not necessarily trying to puzzle out the "meaning" of the text--all these are too different from what students have previously been taught. Some, at this point, do catch on; and almost all students do so by the second or third time because they like writing such papers. Students feel creative, less restrained; many, for the first time, do not outline or plan ahead the form. As they like to say, "I just let it flow." Two things happen in these early drafts that are crucial to successful writing later when analysis, precision, and an overall reading of the text are in order. First, students do not generalize nearly as much when they describe their own lives and minds. These papers are detailed, both in what they describe from the text and in the associations they make. Second, students realize the correlation between literature and their own lives at a conscious level, which often they have never done before.

Using their experiences in their writing does more than excite the students; it helps them better understand the complexities of the literary text they are reading. One understands literature through one's understanding of life, and vice versa, in ever-deepening contexts. I have students probe in this way, through a succession of drafts, in order to understand better both the text and themselves. The following example demonstrates the kind of writing I look for in these early drafts, writing that is exploration, above all else (and sometimes fun); the passage is extracted from a response to D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking Horse Winner":

> Lately I've had more money than I used to, but it seems the same, judging by the balance of my checkbook. I make more, but I spend more. However, I don't think I lust after money the way Paul's mother does. She wants to be lucky, rather than rich. As she says, a rich person can lose his money; a lucky person always comes up with more. Yet more money, in this story, leads to disaster. There is almost a curse on it, a curse on the riches. I know there is not a curse on mine, won in the sweaty kitchen of McDonalds. When the family gets more

> money, the house whispers, "there must be more money, there must be more money." My room isn't whispering, but maybe I should take it as a warning and cut out my materialistic ways....

Most students, obviously, are not this skilled, either as writers or responders. One can see in this example--and the characteristics are the same for nearly all of my students with these papers--that the writing is not stiff but has an engaging voice; and that there are many specifics here, specifics that could be incorporated later into a polished essay on this story.

Spontaneity and an involvement with the text--these show up on the early drafts, especially as the quarter passes and students practice using the guideline. As students get better and faster, it becomes a tool by which they explore any story or poem after reading; so that students write for a half hour or so, using the guideline, before a class discussion on a text. They come better prepared to discuss and listen, both because they know more about the text and because they know there is something in it which matters to them.

For third or fourth drafts (usually the first one I see is a second, if not a third), I encourage students to begin exploring further what intrigues them from their paper. Now having a tentative subject of their own choosing, students re-read their stories or poems. The "mysteries" of the text begin to come clear; students choose particular details and examples to back up their points. The papers evolve into a detailed reading of one aspect of the text and become less self-exploration. Students observe and analyse "technical" features--a story's structure or a poem's prosody--which are now more interesting to them, because form becomes an integral part of meaning, rather than parts of a problem that need to be understood in order to solve the problem correctly.

Students work on a paper for many weeks, contrary to the usual practice in a freshman course of having students write a paper per week. I base grades on three "finished" papers turned in over the last two weeks of the term, papers on stories or poems which the students have lived with for a period of time. Such a process makes sense, is more in line with what we require of upper-division English majors or of ourselves: multiple readings, multiple explorations in writing. And the exploration falls into a pattern which invites engagement on the part of students--personal, free-flowing papers gradually become analytical, "objective" readings. To illustrate, I will take you draft by draft through one student's responses to Lawrence's "Odour of Chrysanthemums," a difficult, perturbing story.

In Jean's first draft (using the guideline), rather than focus on the man-woman relationship--perhaps the main subject of the story--she discusses the desolate lives, the daughter, the flowers:

> The rut of life has caught these people in its web. Everything is routine, desolate, and hopeless....

> What is there to hope for? Everyday is the same hardworking, backbreaking, and joyless task without laughter or reward. At the ending of the story Elizabeth realizes that even her marriage was one of routine; an endless task with duties accomplished and minimal needs met. The chrysanthemums typify the possible untapped beauty behind these lives. Although the flowers have great potential beauty and a sweet smell, just as Elizabeth is a handsome woman, they are continually described as dishevelled, ragged, pale, and brown; the very words that could just as easily describe these people. Elizabeth yearns for the beauty of life just as she grasps for the faded beauty of the chrysanthemums. Her daughter does not have the resignation of the mother but has the childlike, young hope for a bright tomorrow in the same way that she sees the beauty in the flowers. Elizabeth realizes after her husband's death all that their lives could have been but weren't. The shock reveals the truth, but is it too late?

After this first paragraph, which takes up most of page one, we see why Jean reacted to the description of Elizabeth's dreary life--she sees her own life at a big university as falling into the same pattern:

> Everyday I face the same routine. How many times have I failed to see the beauty as I walk along. I get caught up with the worries and troubles of the day.... How much more would I get out of life if I strove a little harder to be all that I could be. When pressures bear down too heavy, face them as a challenge of self rather than a powerful enemy. Life is meant for living and for a purpose. I too was meant for a purpose and I pray that I'll fulfill it....

This writing, concerning her personal life, is not as good as before. She falls easily into cliche, into giving herself a moral pep talk. But besides pointing this out gently, and asking her if she is particularizing these sentiments, I let such writing pass. More important to me is that Jean's reading of the story has made her think about her own life, about whether she is like Elizabeth or the daughter.

Jean's second draft introduces little new about her understanding of the story, but it greatly develops the "personal experience" angle. The main change in form is that she now constructs her paper by introducing a point from the story and developing it with examples from both the story and her life, rather than make two separate blocks. Instead of using the generalities of her earlier draft, she brings in particulars from her life: competitive running, a specific race, other runners. About the routine of her own life: "I set myself a fairly disciplined schedule. My day is filled with studies, training, time spent with friends, and quiet time with God." The paper, on the whole, is competent, but not unusually so: a solid "B" if I would have to grade it. Nothing suggests at this point, and this is true of nearly all of the students' early drafts, the insights that she will obtain eventually. But the foundation has been laid: she has written twice about the story, read it many times; she has found a topic that she cares about; she has a commitment to understand this story and writing about it well.

Several weeks pass before Jean returns to the story. Choosing this paper to be one of her graded, polished papers to be turned in at the end of the term, she re-reads and re-writes to understnad more fully the story, and to drop out the personal experiences but keep the personal voice. This paper is a breakthrough--both for her ability to write about the complexities of this particular story and to realize her capabilities to do so for any story to come. One improvement in this draft, in the writing and in the reading, is that she takes a point she had made earlier and fleshes it out. She had brought up the routine and desolateness of these people; now she expands and introduces a parallel condition in the setting:

> Dullness, hard work, and routine mark the lives of the people. Miners, their wives, and their families live in a culture of hard dirty work, taverns, and poverty. They are overburdened people resigned to life. The miners are consistently described as shadows, a gray somber group, or a dreary flow of men. Even the scenery picks up on the depression and hopelessness of the people. Bony vines, winter-craked trees, ragged cabbages, and dishevelled pink chrysanthemums describe the haggard countryside.

Jean raises new points and blends them into her reading of the story:

> Her son is a sullen, defiant, and resentful boy who seems to have a negative outlook on life. The daughter, however, views life in the light. She is full of hope and enjoys life. These contrary attitudes can be seen by their reactions to the chrysanthemums. John tears at the wisps and drops the petals just as he resents and tears life. He has dropped hope and does not see the potential for beauty that is there. Annie on the other hand is in rapture over the flowers in her mother's waistband and she is eager to smell them and finds the smell beautiful. She is also eager with hope to face life. Not only can the opposing natures of the children be seen in their attitudes about the chrysanthemums but also how they are placed in respect to the light. John is always in the shadows while Annie is in the light. "The lad, his face a dusky mark on the shadows sat watching her [Annie] who was transfigured in the red glow." The darkness can also symbolize blindness and the light--vision.

The insights achieved here--the differences in how John and Annie react to the flowers; how Lawrence portrays them in light or dark--are uncommon for freshmen and are not ones she would have likely made if writing one paper on this story.

For her fourth and final draft, Jean carefully edits: using punctuation for meaning, tightening sentences, incorporating the formalities of writing. I explain quickly to her in a conference how she might use semicolons, dashes, and colons to show relationships between ideas--she does so in five places. She drops out cliched phrases ("who seems to have a negative outlook on life"), and combines sentences to save words. She introduces a passage from the story with a colon, as opposed to letting it sit there as its own sentence. At this stage she is eager to make such changes, because of her previous efforts and her commitment to understanding this story.

Students carry something important away from the classroom if they learn only a sense of pride in careful reading and writing; we know that many writing "problems," in mechanics, form, and thought, exist because writers don't really care. To open up personal experience in early drafts of papers is a method to help students care, besides allowing them to discover their own subjects and to explore the relationships between literature and life. There are limitations, of course. Some students seize the "opportunity" they envision and don't address the complexities of the literary text; some never escape a formulaic response, dealing in generalities that are safer and come easier.

It must be remembered--by instructors wincing at the subjectiveness of the approach and student responses or at the lack of rigorous training in terminology and thought--that this method does not dictate what goes on in each classroom session, but is a general approach centered on the structuring of writing assignments. In class, students do not discuss their roommates or cars or crush on the next-door neighbor when they were nine years old, unless briefly to explain *why* they understand something the way they do. Classroom discussions follow, in general, Formalist principles. But a balance is struck between what the effect is and how it is accomplished in the text, between intellectual analysis and feeling--a balance encouraging students to become active participators with literature. To the question "why read? why write?" I want students to talk about something other than homework, grades, and requirements. I want them to answer, "because it matters to me."

Notes

[1] William E. Coles, Jr., *The Plural I* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978).

[2] For an excellent collection of reader-response essays, see *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed., Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

[3] Louise Rosenblatt, *The Reader, The Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978).

[4] Rosenblatt, pp. 24-25. I am indebted, for reference to this passage, to Anthony Petrosky's article, "From Story to Essay: Reading and Writing," *CCC* 32 (Feb. 1982), pp. 19-36. See note 7

for more about this essay.

[5] Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1970), p. 44.

[6] For representative works, see Robert Schank and Robert Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1977); and David Rumelhart, "Schemata: The Building Blocks of Cognition," in R. Spiro, B. Bruce, and W. Brewer, eds., *Theoretical Issues in Reading and Comprehension* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1980). As cited in Petrosky.

[7] This guideline is adopted from a "response heuristic" articulated by David Bleich in *Subjective Criticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978). Petrosky uses Bleich's heuristic in his graduate-level reading seminar, and from his article I first got the idea of using a revised heuristic in the freshman class. For readers who wish a fuller discussion of the theoretical issues concerning "comprehension," I point you toward Petrosky's fine essay.

[8] I might mention at this point that I do not "mark up" papers in the usual way, or even in an unusual way. Students bring their drafts to me for a short conference weekly, as my approach seems to demand face-to-face discussion of student drafts.

[9] Though students do not turn in a full essay to be graded once a week, they write a great deal, inside and outside of class, on literature and on their lives.

Call for Curriculum Materials

The NCTE Committee to Evaluate Curriculum Guidelines and Competency Requirements evaluates curriculum materials as a service to schools, identifies outstanding curriculum materials for display at the NCTE Annual Convention, and creates a booklet containing annotated lists of outstanding curriculum materials chosen during the past three years. In addition, many of the recommended curriculum guides are entered into the ERIC database by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, which is located at NCTE headquarters.

School districts wishing to have curriculum guides evaluated should mail *two* copies of their guides to the NCTE Committee to Evaluate Curriculum Guides and Competency Requirements, Attention: Jane McClellan, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. In addition, the committee would appreciate two statements: one that indicates whether the guide should be considered for inclusion in the next publication of *Recommended English Language Arts Curriculum Guides, K-12*, and a second that describes the development of the guide, the nature of the population and community, and the guides' relationship to other curriculum materials in use. When a school district sends a curriculum guide for review, a member of the committee examines the materials carefully, reports in written form according to established criteria, and records comments on a cassette tape that is sent to the participating district.

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MEASURING RESPONSE TO LITERATURE: A MULTI-MODAL APPROACH

Richard Behm

One of the problems with a reader-based response to literature is that it presents a practical dilemma for teachers. Stated in two ways this dilemma is: how do I tell if my students are responding "aesthetically" or "appreciatively" to literature, and what do I put in my gradebook?

Terms such as aesthetic response and literary appreciation are admittedly difficult to define, let alone seek to measure. Yet for a teacher who accepts a reader-based response to literature of the kind convincingly urged by Louise Rosenblatt and others, the problem of verification remains. Given the complexity of literary response and the decidedly small amount we know about it, the more information we can gather to get a "sense" of our students' literary responses, the better off we will be--better off in determining the effectiveness of our teaching and in determining what our students have learned.

Simply stated, to verify literary response, the more information we have, the more accurate we will be, and the better we will be able to adjust teaching strategies to meet our students' needs. With this in mind, the following multi-modal approach for measuring response to literature is advanced. The chart at the end of this article is a method for determining and following the literary responses of our students, based not on one mode, but four.

The four modes are based on four types of evidence the teacher collects in the day-to-day classroom contact with students. The modes also reflect both the subjective and objective observations and evaluations that a teacher makes in most grading situations. This chart, however, provides a record that, taken _in toto_, should yield an accurate portrait of the literary responses of a student over a semester's time. At the very least, it gives enough information on which to base a "grade" with more reliability than sole reliance on quizzes and papers. At its best, the chart gives the teacher valuable information to adjust techniques or approaches with certain students and to determine the overall effectiveness of course materials and classroom activities.

At the outset I emphasize that this chart is predicated upon a reader-based response to literature. The reader's experience of literature, the interaction between the reader and the text, and the growth in the reader's appreciation of literature are the focus. To these ends, certain teaching techniques are included in the chart which are extensions of a reader-based theory of literary instruction. The reading journal, small group discussion based on personal responses, and short, student-teacher conferences are all examples of these teaching techniques designed

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to encourage reader-based responses.

The reading journal, for example, is a way of fostering regular, personal interaction between the student and the work the student is reading. The journal contains affective responses, favorite quotations, responses to teacher-initiated questions, responses to student- and group-initiated questions, and so on. The journal is primarily "expressive," giving students the opportunities to explore their own thoughts and feelings, without having to subject them to the critical scrutiny of a teacher. Ideas from the journal may also be used to develop formal, "transactional" writings during the course.

The small group discussions and the short, teacher-student conferences (3-10 minutes) help students to articulate, examine, and refine their responses, testing them against the responses, perceptions and interpretations of others. An innovative approach to teacher-student and student-student discussion of literary texts is found in Agnes J. Webb's "Transactions with Literary Texts: Conversations in Classrooms," (English Journal, March 1982). Any techniques that teachers have found effective in nurturing reader-based responses to literature could be substituted for or added to the items in the chart. The chart is meant to be flexible and represents only a sample of possiblitites.

The chart is also designed to be flexible in the way a teacher may use it for grading purposes. Although I use a system of AA (Above Average), A (Average), and BA (Below Average), the chart could also be used with letter grades, a numerical scale, or a check-plus-minus system. An important caveat needs to be added concerning the use of numerical systems or letter grades: averaging is not appropriate to use with this chart. An example of the danger of averaging: suppose a student shows little enthusiasm or aptitude at the beginning of the semester, but in the second half really seems to get interested in the material, works hard, writes well, discusses effectively and so on? Such a student has grown in literary response and should not be penalized for earlier deficiencies. An apparently logical alternative might be to count only responses near the end of the semester. Yet such a system would penalize students who had developed responses to works of literature covered throughout the semester, but for whatever reasons (and the reasons are legion) do not respond to works in the last two weeks. After all, we all encounter works that we just cannot "get into."

Therefore, it is best to view the chart as a profile that when reviewed by the teacher reveals a definite sense, a clear picture of a student's literary response over a semester.

The chart is also flexible in the ways it may be used to record information. It is not necessary to mark in every category during each grading period. The teacher may record information eclectically or systematically. Under the eclectic method, the teacher records marks in the various modes as they are observed in the course of the daily classroom activities. Under the systematic method, the teacher may elect from a number of options.

For instance, the teacher might record marks for only one item in each mode each grading period, taking care to add any noteworthy marks in other items of the modes. Or the teacher might record marks for only a fourth of the class each grading period, again taking care to note obvious areas for those students not being marked that grading period. Or the teacher might establish areas of emphasis, based on the material being covered and the goals the teacher has set. Any number of other adaptations of the chart are also possible.

The first mode on the chart, Quantifiable Evidence, is the most objective. It could involve simple number counts. These counts could be based on a pre-set range of figures; for the reading journal, for instance, 3-5 pages = below average; 6-9 pages = average; 10-12 pages = above average. Or the numbers could be based on the actual amount accomplished by students during the first two weeks of class. If the number counts are based on actual amounts accomplished, the teacher may choose not to focus on the counting at all (counting often shifts concerns away from the process of responding to literature toward the grade) and record only a judgment of whether or not the student is reading, writing, or discussing an average, below average, or above average amount. Regardless of the system adopted, it is not necessary for the teacher to read each and every journal entry at great length or make entries in the items in this category every grading period.

The same holds true for the next category, Subjective Evidence. These items demand a judgment by the teacher based on her or his professional experience and the knowledge gained from daily contact with and observation of students. Subjectivity has received unjustifiably bad press. Usually subjectivity is opposed to objectivity and in measuring is viewed as less accurate. Yet even the most rigid statistical studies inevitably involve some kind of subjectivity. Complete objectivity is an illusion. Rather than seeking complete objectivity, we should develop valid subjectivity in grading; that is, subjectivity based upon sensitive observation and professional experience and expertise.

Noting students' ability both in forming questions about literary works and in responding to discussion questions is a good way of measuring the quality of their responses. If students in their reading journal and class discussion show the ability to move away from literal questions and responses, they are showing signs of increasing sophistication of literary response.

Two articles are of help to teachers in making subjective judgments about the quality of students' responses. George Hillocks in "Toward a Hierarchy of Skills in the Comprehension of Literature" (English Journal, March 1980) identifies "levels of comprehension skills relevant to reading literature," and establishes ground rules for phrasing questions which can be used in discussions, in assignments, and in a reading journal. The questions move from the literal to the inferential. Good readers of works of literature will, in their oral and written comments, show more ability at inference-making than will those who may still be stuggling with literal aspects of a work. Students, of course, who are having difficulty with the literal meaning of a work, may still be "affected" by the work in some way, and evidence of this kind may be noted by the teacher under the Affective Evidence as a sign of literary response--even though the student may not yet have a completely accurate reading of the text itself.

The second article, "Reading as Inquiry: An Approach to Literature Learning" (English Journal, January 1981), by Bryant Fillion describes the various kinds of questioning students engage in when dealing with a literary text. Fillion's student-based questions complement Hillocks' teacher-based questions. Fillion's inquiry-approach moves from the factual to the evaluative, paralleling Hillocks' development from the literal to the inferential. Fillion's approach is based on "problem-finding," Hillocks' on "problem-solving." Fillion also provides a chart to track student's growth in questioning ability.

If the teacher observes both the ability of students to respond to a spectrum of questions and the development of the sophistication in kinds of questions they themselves ask about a text, the teacher should be able to achieve an accurate, albeit subjective, measure of the quality of oral and written responses to literature.

Hillocks' hierarchy of questions is also of use in the third mode, Documentable Evidence. Essay tests and written assignments that utilize Hillocks' questioning format will help in documenting (i.e., establishing ability through more traditional means) growth in literary response. The Documentable Evidence mode also allows the teacher to account for daily quizzes or other assignments that do little more than measure whether the student has read the assignment at all, or how much detail the student can recall. Such "policing" assignments are disagreeable, and I would argue that in a classroom in which students are actively involved with and responding to literature, they are often unnecessary. Evidence of success in teaching literature might show up on the chart as the elimination of "memory quizzes" because the students no longer need them as a tool for motivation and the teacher no longer needs them as evidence that the students are reading. The Documentable Evidence also allows the teacher leeway to develop "non-written" assignments, for although writing should be integral to a literature class, other arts and other ways of responding to literature should also be encouraged.

The last mode, Affective Evidence, presents even more difficulty than the subjective mode. How are we to measure if our students are being "affected" by a work? Can we make reliable judgments in this area? What are we to look for as evidence that our students are being "affected" by a work?

Most teachers can and do form opinions about students' attitudes toward literature, and these opinions undoubtedly color the grading, even of those teachers who claim to adhere to objective criteria. What teacher can resist the student who shows an obvious and sincere enthusiasm for a work that the teacher also likes and responds to with enthusiasm? In measuring attitude it is not necessary, nor even desirable, for a student to be enthusiastic about every work read. In fact, a student's lack of enthusiasm may be evidence that an evaluative response is taking place--that the student is thinking about a work, perhaps comparing it with others, testing it against his or her own experience, and judging it accordingly. A responsive reader of literature does not like everything he or she reads, but uses complex and ever-changing criteria for judging individual works.

In seeking to measure attitude, reflection, internalization, and evaluation, teachers must be sensitive to a variety of responses that provide evidence that students are being affected by a work.

Teachers can become aware of the kinds of physiological responses typical of readers actively engaged in reading a work of literature. Readers who have been affected by a work are often eager to share their ideas and opinions about it with others. When teachers discover students talking about a book in the hallways or passing a book around among friends and relatives, that is pretty clear evidence that an affective response is taking place. A related social response is evidence that reading a work has somehow altered a student's behavior either in word or deed. Literature, especially great literature, has the power to change, to "affect" our lives. Evidence that this process it taking place in our students is worth collecting as a measure of their growth in literary appreciation and, though more difficult to record, provides a more complete profile of literary response than sole reliance on Quantifiable or Documentable Evidence.

Reading-related responses are also useful measures of the affective mode. If a student is caught reading the assigned English novel in a math class, that, though it may be evidence of poor judgment, is also evidence of a positive attitude about and engagement with a literary text. Similarly, students who read ahead, who prefer reading over other tasks, who seek out works by an author, other than the one assigned, are showing evidence of being "affected" by what they are reading.

Another way to measure the four items under Affective Evidence is in the overall marks in all the other items and modes in the chart. If the student is reflecting, internalizing, and evaluating, and has a positive attitude, these things should show up elsewhere. For instance, a student who doesn't write well may show affective responses in conferences with the teacher or in small group discussions. A student who does not like to participate in class may show affective responses in the reading journal. A close examination of the chart itself may provide the information that a teacher needs to determine affective responses by students.

It is in the regular recording of evidence in all four modes that an overall "sense" or profile of a student's development of a response to literature emerges. A comprehensive objective measure of literary response will never be found. This, however, does not mean we should not seek to measure the literary responses of our students. It is only in seeking such measures that we can evaluate our students' appreciation of literature and make adjustments in our teaching to further nourish response to literature. The multi-modal approach and chart provide such a tool; the information yielded is worth the bookkeeping involved.

HOW TEACHERS CAN EASE STUDENTS' FEAR OF WRITING

Fear of writing, a major obstacle to learning, can be minimized if teachers and supervisors of writing programs take careful steps to combat it. What to do and why is the subject of Reducing Writing Apprehension, the latest booklet in the Theory and Research into Practice Series.

Author Michael W. Smith, a University of Chicago doctoral candidate with eight years' high school teaching experience, surveys what educators know about the causes and effects of writing apprehension. He sketches insights into the problem from case studies, surveys, classroom experiments, and the work of theorists. Apprehensive writers, he notes, avoid writing tasks and writing instruction, and thus don't get the practice they need to develop as writers. Apprehension isn't confined to remedial writers; even successful authors may wrestle with it. Much remains to be learned about what triggers writing apprehension, but clues point to aversive teacher responses as the major cause. Evaluations that stress what's wrong with student papers create destructive pressures on some students, instilling the paralyzing notion that their first drafts must be perfect.

Teachers can best combat writing apprehension, Smith says, by considering it in every phase of instruction, from the ways they prepare students for writing assignments to the marks they make on student papers and the language they use to discuss them. He points out ways to build students' confidence and to help them see writing as a logical, step-by-step process. The booklet includes sample evaluation checklists, worksheets, and a bibliography.

Reducing Writing Apprehension is published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Council of Teachers of English. (40 pages, paperbound. Price: $5.7[illegible], NCTE members, $4.50. Available from NCTE, Urbana, Illinois. Stock No. 39671)

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MEASURING RESPONSE TO LITERATURE: A MULTI-MODAL APPROACH

	GRADING PERIOD				
MODE	1	2	3	4	FINAL
QUANTIFIABLE EVIDENCE					
Number of pages (or books, poems, stories) read					
Number of entries in Reading Journal					
Length of entries in Reading Journal					
Frequency of discussion participation					
SUBJECTIVE EVIDENCE					
Quality of Reading Journal entries					
Quality of discussion participation					
Quality of comments in conferences					
Quality of materials read					
DOCUMENTABLE EVIDENCE					
Quizzes/Recall tests					
Essay tests					
Written papers					
Other projects (dramatic recitation, artwork, etc.)					
AFFECTIVE EVIDENCE					
Attitude					
Reflection					
Internalization					
Evaluation					

College Reading: Responses to the CUNY Reading Seminars

Reviewed by Stuart Brown and Zita Ingham

Investigators in the field of reading have contributed much of what little is presently known about reading-writing relationships. The need to recognize the connections between reading and writing seems crucial to those interested in postsecondary basic level students, if only because of the observation that progress in one of the two areas fosters progress in the other. CUNY's Instructional Resource Center sponsors seminars that bring together nationally recognized experts in reading and linguistics with basic skills faculty to discuss significant aspects of theory, curriculum, teaching methodology, assessment, and research in reading. In the monograph College Reading: Responses to the CUNY Reading Seminars, papers by Jeanne S. Chall, Anthony R. Petrosky, and Roger W. Shuy, and response articles by CUNY faculty raise questions, give practical suggestions, and discuss implications of these important issues.

"Reading Achievement," Anthony R. Petrosky (pp. 7-16).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (AEP) surveyed a broad student population in three age groups to assess reading skills and attitudes toward reading, which was reported in Reading, Thinking and Writing: Results from the 1979-80 National Assessment of Reading and Literature. "Reading Achievement," extracted from this report, presents a portrait of seventeen-year-olds and their general orientation to reading, assesses how well those students read, and makes recommendations to enhance student attitudes, habits and practices in reading. Petrosky's assessment of student attitudes is that "While most students think it is important to read, few read for enjoyment and even fewer would choose to read a book in their spare time" (p. 9). After detailing student orientation to reading, Petrosky examines how well they read. He concludes that American education has been successful at teaching students to obtain initial comprehension, and to make preliminary inferences and judgements. He notes that fewer than 5 to 10 percent of the student population goes beyond initial interpretation to reexamine the text and discover a "richer and possibly more accurate comprehension of the text as a whole" (p. 9). Petrosky quotes from the NAEP: "Few students could provide more than superficial responses to such tasks [explanations of criteria, analysis of text, defense of judgements, point of view], and even the better responses showed little evidence of well-developed problem-solving strategies or critical thinking skills" (p. 10). He concludes that these findings are "a direct reflection of current practices in testing and instruction" (p. 14). What students need most, he suggests, is training in critical thinking skills. He makes five suggestions to overcome the shortcomings apparent in students' reading orien-

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tation:

1) Multiple-choice and easy answer formats need to be dropped in favor of exercises that encourage critical thinking. Reading and writing need to be more closely integrated. Students need to know how to write about their reading.

2) Critical thinking skills should be stressed across a student's curriculum, and not left solely to reading and English teachers.

3) Teaching writing is not enough to develop critical thinking skills. Classroom practices need to provide problem-solving discussions where students defend their point of view.

4) Institutional support is needed to provide for massive inservice training of both teachers and administrators in critical thinking skills development.

5) Current textbooks need to be assessed for their value in developing critical thinking.

Petrosky notes the diminishing resources for education, but argues that students need to "engage in genuine problem-solving discussions, and they must talk and write about what they read" (p. 16). Otherwise, he suggests, "the nation's seventeen year olds cannot go beyond initial comprehension to extend and defend their reading of texts" (p. 16).

Excerpt from "A Proposal for Reading Stages," Jeanne S. Chall (pp. 17-22)

The second article in College Reading is from Chapter 2, Stages of Reading Development (McGraw-Hill, 1983) by Jeanne S. Chall. Chall presents six stages in reading development as "a scheme for arranging and interpreting facts from basic and applied research and the wisdom gained from experience in the classroom and the clinic" (p. 17). Age and grade levels within these stages are only approximations, but she suggests an awareness of these stages will enable instructors more specifically to help students reach later stages of reading development. The model itself is developmental. Each of the stages presupposes earlier stages. As skills in a later stage are acquired, earlier skills are subsumed. The stages are

STAGE 0. PREREADING: BIRTH TO AGE 6.

Children begin to acquire language skills simply by living in a literate culture. Peripheral contact with an alphabetic writing system leads to an accumulating knowledge about letters, words, and books, and their uses.

STAGE 1. INITIAL READING, OR DECODING, STAGE: GRADES 1-2, AGES 6-7.

At this stage, children acquire knowledge and insight about the arbitrary system of spelling that comprises words which comprise text.

STAGE 2. CONFIRMATION, FLUENCY, UNGLUING FROM PRINT: GRADES 2-3, AGES 7-8.

This stage is where the reader confirms what is already known. "Reading stories previously heard increases fluency" (p. 18). Attention is paid to developing the reading process rather than to the content of the text. Chall suggests that adults participate in this stage by reading "popular fiction, magazines, mysteries, and some parts of the daily newspaper--reading from which one does not learn much that is new or exciting but which is confirmed and satisfying" (p. 18).

STAGE 3. READING FOR LEARNING THE NEW: A FIRST STEP.

Stage 3 is the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. "During stages 1 and 2 what is learned concerns more the relating of print to speech while Stage 3 involves more the relating of print to ideas" (p. 19). Word meaning and prior knowledge assume larger importance. Skills are improved for extracting information from the text. Chall divides Stage 3 into Phase A (grades 4-6, ages 9-11) and Phase B (grades 7-8, ages 12-14). Phase A includes developing reading ability to go beyond egocentric purposes to obtain knowledge about the world. Phase B involves the beginning of textual analysis and critical reaction.

STAGE 4. MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS: HIGH SCHOOL, AGES 14-18.

"The essential characteristic of reading in Stage 4 is that it involves dealing with more than one point of view" (p. 20). It is acquired by encountering more than one set of facts and viewpoints as a result of a wider variety of reading.

STAGE 5. CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION--A WORLD VIEW: COLLEGE, AGE 18 AND ABOVE.

At this stage, the reader is "able to use selectively the printed material in those areas of knowledge central to one's concern" (p. 21). The reader constructs knowledge after determining what to read, how much of it needs to be read, and what level of detail. The process (analysis, synthesis and judgement) leads to "the ability to construct knowledge on a high level of abstraction and generality and to create one's own "truth" from the "truths" of others" (p. 21).

"Finding a Sense of Wonder in Language and Literacy," Roger W. Shuy (pp. 22-34).

Roger W. Shuy begins "Finding a Sense of Wonder in Language and Literacy" by suggesting a purpose behind language: ". . . behind these senses, in sequence if not in importance, is the language which we have to recreate what we sense, to preserve it, reflect on it and sustain the wonder which our eyes and ears first glimpse" (p. 23). He goes on to indicate "we are unaware of language as we use it" (p. 24) and to argue for a language instruction based on awareness of the "efficient first-language acquistition of infants" (p. 25). Work he and others have done with sixth graders on daily dialogue journal writing has uncovered three underlying considerations which mirror infant language development. They are

1) The Functional Consideration in which language is used to get things done;

2) The Condition of Interactiveness in which language is exchanged with others; and

3) The Condition of Being Self-Generated in which "the speaker or writer needs to generate the information, feeling or perspective by him or herself" (p. 28). All of these considerations are neglected in current classroom situations. Shuy suggests that writing as it is taught is not functional, that it elicits teacher evaluation as its function and does not satisfy direct student need. Interactiveness is discouraged by becoming "highly monitored, infrequent responses to teacher questions" (p. 26). And self-generation is abnegated by language drills, coaching and assigned topics. He calls for implementing these considerations to return language to its "natural event of communication, that is to be functional" (p. 26). He indicates that "when language is absent, when it is mere performance and when it is not functional and interactive, communication breaks down" (p. 28). He suggests a need for self-generation of language, that the speaker be personally responsible: "Saying somebody else's words or ideas is not natural language" (p. 28). Shuy points to four dangers in continuing current language teaching practices: 1) reductionism rather than constructive holistic practices; 2) the acceptance of text publishers' dictates of what students need to know rather than reliance on teacher and classroom experience on a day-to-day basis; 3) increased public dictation of what to teach and its emphasis on evaluation and comparison; and 4) the emphasis on acceptable social behavior over the development of individual cognitive functions. In response to these dangers he offers four suggestions:

> 1) "Stop being dependent on basal readers or other commercially prepared language arts material to dictate our teaching" (p. 32). 2) "Stop standardized tests of reading, writing and other pretensions at assessing children's progress in these areas" (p. 33). 3) "Join writing with reading in our earliest elementary literacy programs" (p. 33). 4) "Make our classrooms commmunicative, not evaluative" (p. 34).

He argues for a return to natural language use and acquisition, for learning to be communicative, interactive, functional, and self-generated. By making small steps such as using journals and opening the classroom to more dialogue "we run the risk of improving the quality of our students' lives immeasurably and, at the same time, making our own work a great deal more fulfilling" (p. 34).

Responses to the Papers

Among the responses by participants of the CUNY reading seminars are articles related to aspects of theory, curriculum, and assessment. In "On Roger Shuy, Linguistics, and College Reading," Martha J. Bell acknowledges Shuy's emphasis on functional considerations--that students' work should focus on themes related to their interests; on the condition of interactiveness--that the issues of the class be resolved through discussion among students and teacher; and on self-genreation--the process that enables students to set the directions for their own learning. Bell gives practical suggestions for applications of these theories, so that ultimately, "students will read real texts for real purposes in real situations" (p. 36). In the interest of further practical applications, Phyllis Cash, in "Reading: Theory and Practice at CUNY," demonstrates the ways in which materials and procedures at CUNY concur with theories discussed by Chall, Petrosky, and Shuy, and with A College Reading Curriculum Model, which was developed at CUNY.

The next four papers, dealing with curricular issues, discuss methods for combining reading instruction with content courses for underprepared college students. While the first two articles offer rationales for the use of themes and other content material in reading courses, Beth Pacheco and Frank E. Brown discuss practical uses of material based on students' interests. Pacheco's article is a particularly detailed account of a skills workshop given in coordination with an introductory psychology course. Ellen Block's "What Does the Test Test?" focuses on issues of assessment, particularly the use of the Descriptive Test of Language Skills. Of particular concern is the difference between tasks required by the test and tasks used in the classroom, and Block cites the need for a closer look at reading assessment.

Concluding Remarks

In "The CUNY Reading Seminars: A Look Around, A Look Ahead," Dolores Y. Straker assesses the development of the reading seminars and points out areas of research proposed by the seminar and response papers in light of CUNY's Reading Curriculum Model. Straker poses questions about the major issues of reading processes, practices, and assessment, and suggests relevant areas of inquiry: the developmental reading stages, the relationships of reading processes and students' prior experiences, and the interrelationships of developmental stages of reading and writing. College Reading: Responses to the CUNY Reading Seminars contains valuable theoretical and practical information for those concerned with issues in reading and the connections between reading and writing. This monograph is available through the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communications Skills, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

SOME COMMON CONCERNS OF READING AND WRITING FOR ESL STUDENTS

Barbara Marie Wilcoxson

The majority of writing instruction available for beginning ESL students has very little to do with the teaching of composition skills. The concern of most texts and teachers at this level seems to revolve around establishing linguistic competence. Pauline Rojas, "Writing to Learn" (TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 2, June 1968), advocates this position. She feels that students at this level are incapable of writing without extremely tight controls and that students should not be encouraged to write outside of this framework as they will develop incorrect writing habits. Keeping this point in mind, we find that texts and teachers tend to present an array of grammatically-seeded exercies which afford the students little opportunity to write beyond the level of linguistic and syntactical manipulations.

Barry Taylor, in "Teaching Composition to Low-Level ESL Students" (TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 10, September 1976), proposes a program which not only includes grammatical instruction, but also instruction in composition skills. At this point it is necessary to make a distinction between grammar and composition skills. The ability to write a concise, logical paragraph or essay involves more than the ability to write grammatical sentences. It is my premise that non-native speakers of English must not only possess a certain degree of linguistic competence, but must also be exposed to and see the function of those linguistic elements as related to organizational patterns, topic sentences, and English rhetoric. One avenue for achieving this exposure would be to develop the students' reading skill so that they could evaluate their mastery of these principles by comparing and contrasting their products with an understanding of the native model. It is the purpose of this paper to give a brief theoretical background discussion of this reading skill and to show that reading and writing have mutual concerns.

Reading is a skill that differs from other skills in that it has no specific content and therefore cannot be taught as most other skills can. Reading has often been regarded as only a medium through which other skills are learned. This is limiting to the scope of reading, as reading is an experience unto itself. Gephart ("Reading in Today's World," Teaching of Reading, Staiger, 1973), offers a tentative summary definition:

> Reading is a term used to refer to an interaction by which meaning encoded in visual stimuli by an author becomes meaning in the mind of the reader.

The visual stimuli are part of an arbitrarily designed system of graphic symbols. In learning to read, students encode in their

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minds and respond to the morphological characteristics of the graphic symbols, the alphabet, and the syntactical spacing directed by the language. The same procedure is used in writing, with the exception that students produce the symbol rather than responding to the symbol. Therefore, it is not surprising that when acquiring second language skills, the sound/symbol relationship may become confused with that of the mother tongue. My reference to mother tongue as opposed to native language is a expansion of this point. The articulatory functions that the tongue must perform have hitherto been conditioned by the demands of the sound/symbol relationship present in the native language. In teaching second language skills, certain articulatory functions of the tongue may have to be re-trained, and students will also have to be able to make the appropriate acoustical distinctions. Specifically, in terms of reading, problems arise when the graphic symbols of the native language closely resemble those of the second language, as in English and German. Wilga Rivers, in Teaching Foreign Language Skills (Chicago, 1981), states that students will see familiar combinations of letters (graphic symbols) which signal distinctively different sounds and which ultimately distinguish different organizations of meaning distinctions. The work of Bever and Bower (1970) on "auditory perceptual strategies" relates the visual clues to grammar rather than just to phonological (phonetic) data. The grammar of any given language is an arbitrarily designed structure which provides a network of actions and interactions at varying levels whereby meaning is established for the language. Each level has an action, or function, and interacts with the other levels. A symbol may not only trigger a sound association, but may also trigger meaning distinctions. For example, in Arabic there exists a /b/ but no /p/. Students may be taught to distinguish this sound according to its phonetic properties but, in learning English, they must be taught to distinguish this sound phonemically. As per the traditional definition of a phoneme, /p/ and /b/ differentiate meaning in English. Therefore, /p/ and /b/ must also be viewed graphically as the representation of that meaning distinction. It is possible to read for understanding without the ability to speak or listen to the language for comprehension; however, pronunciation of words has the advantage of allowing the instructor to check on the accuracy of the sound/symbol integration and of the integration of meaning distinctions which may affect the ability of the grammar to fulfill its function.

The relative ease or difficulty of the reading task is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the graphic symbols. In Arabic the same letter is printed in modified forms depending on whether it is in initial, medial, or final position. And in some languages the graphic symbol is used to express entire ideas, as in Chinese. The characteristics of the graphic symbols are also an important consideration in teaching writing. Speakers of Asiatic and Semitic languages have more barriers to overcome than students whose language reflects a Roman alphabet. With regard to either skill, it is important that an awareness of the graphic symbol and its representative sound and meaning be cultivated in the mind of the student.

Essentially the reader and writer must be in possession of two major skills: first, they must be able to discriminate among the graphic symbols used in the writing system. And second, they must be able to interpret the graphic symbols in order to produce or derive meaning. Staiger, in The Teaching of Reading (1981), states that reading is essentially a cognitive process during which the reader not only comprehends the ideas presented in a text, but also interprets and evaluates them. Therefore, the knowledge which the reader or writer brings to the task, inclusive of the initial recognition and production of the graphic symbols, is most important.

A misconception of some repute is the one which assumes that because students can write or read an essay in their native language, they can necessarily read or write an essay in a second language. Robert Kaplan ("Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education" Readings on English as a Second Language, Croft, 1981) reports that even foreign students who have mastered sound/symbol relationships and have progressed to complex syntactical structures have demonstrated inability to compose or (read) themes, term papers, and essays. The material is all there, but is seems somehow out-of-focus. The foreign student's writing or reading skill is out of focus because the foreign student is employing a rhetoric and a sequence of thought which violate the expectations of the English native reader or writer. Kaplan (1981) states that logic, which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of a culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture.

The thought patterns which writers of English produce and which native readers of English expect as an integral part of their communication form a sequence that is dominantly linear in its development, moving from generalization through a series of examples or the reverse, providing a series of examples and then relating those examples in a single statement at the end of the paragraph. These two types of development represent the common deductive and inductive reasonings which English speakers expect. It is important to orient students to this system, as many other systems vary greatly. In most Semitic language systems, for example, paragraph development is based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative. Kaplan (1981) says that this kind of parallelism is most clearly demonstrated in English by the King James Version of the Old Testament. Two examples follow:

Synonymous parallelism: The balancing of the thought and phrasing of the first statement or idea by the second part.

His descendents will be mighty in the land
and
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Synthetic parallelism: The completion of the idea or thought of the first part in the second part.

Because he inclined his ear to me
therefore,
I will call on him as long as I live.

There are other examples that might be discussed, but these two systems suffice to show that each language and each culture has a paragraph order unique to itself, and that part of learning any language is the mastery of its logical system.

In conclusion, we can see that the teaching of writing and the teaching of reading to ESL students have many mutual concerns. Locally, both skills require an adequate integration of sound/symbol relationships, and both require a certain degree of competence with linguistic and syntactical manipulations. Globally, both skills require instruction in organizational patterns, topic sentences, and English rhetoric. It is then necessary to view reading and writing as skills that complement and support each other. Teaching techniques and approaches should be so devised as to make use of this natural interrelationship.

Teaching Composition: A Position Statement

The NCTE Commission on Composition has prepared and adopted this position paper to state essential principles in the teaching of writing. The statement has been cleared for publication by the Executive Committee of the NCTE. It is an expression of the views of the Commission on Composition and does not represent an official NCTE position statement. The members of the Commission hope that this statement will guide teachers, parents, and administrators in understanding the power of writing and in teaching it effectively.

I. The Act of Writing

Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing, writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world.

The act of writing is accomplished through a process in which the writer imagines the audience, sets goals, develops ideas, produces notes, drafts, and a revised text, and edits to meet the audience's expectations. As the process unfolds, the writer may turn to any one of these activities at any time. We can teach students to write more effectively by encouraging them to make full use of the many activities that comprise the act of writing, not by focusing only on the final written product and its strengths and weaknesses.

II. The Purposes for Writing

In composing, the writer uses language to help an audience understand something the writer knows about the world. The specific purposes for writing vary widely, from discovering the writer's own feelings, to persuading others to a course of action, recreating experience imaginatively, reporting the results of observation, and more.

Writing assignments should reflect this range of purposes. Student writers should have the opportunity to define and pursue writing aims that are important to them. Student writers should also have the opportunity to use writing as an instrument of thought and learning across the curriculum and in the world beyond school.

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III. The Scenes for Writing

In the classroom where writing is especially valued, students should be guided through the writing process; encouraged to write for themselves and for other students, as well as for the teacher; and urged to make use of writing as a mode of learning, as well as a means of reporting on what has been learned. The classroom where writing is especially valued should be a place where students will develop the full range of their composing powers. This classroom can also be the scene for learning in many academic areas, not only English.

Because frequent writing assignments and frequent individual attention from the teacher are essential to the writing classroom, writing classes should not be larger than twenty students.

Teachers in all academic areas who have not been trained to teach writing may need help in transforming their classrooms into scenes for writing. The writing teacher should provide leadership in explaining the importance of this transformation and in supplying resources to help bring it about.

IV. The Teachers of Writing

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Writing teachers should themselves be writers. Through experiencing the struggles and joys of writing, teachers learn that their students will need guidance and support throughout the writing process, not merely comments on the written product. Furthermore, writing teachers who write know that effective comments do not focus on pointing out errors, but go on to the more productive task of encouraging revision, which will help student writers to develop their ideas and to achieve greater clarity and honesty.

Writing teachers should be familiar with the current state of our knowledge about composition. They should know about the nature of the composing process; the relationship between reading and writing; the functions of writing in the world of work; the value of the classical rhetorical tradition; and more. Writing teachers should use this knowledge in their teaching, contribute to it in their scholarly activities, and participate in the professional organizations that are important sources of this knowledge.

The knowledgeable writing teacher can more persuasively lead colleagues in other academic areas to increased attention to writing in their classes. The knowledgeable teacher can also work more effectively with parents and administrators to promote good writing instruction.

V. The Means of Writing Instruction

Students learn to write by writing. Guidance in the writing process and discussion of the students' own work should be the central means of writing instruction. Students should be encouraged to comment on each other's writing, as well as receiving frequent, prompt, individualized attention from the teacher. Reading what others have written, speaking about one's responses to their writing, and listening to the responses of others are important activities in the writing classroom. Textbooks and other instructional resources should be of secondary importance.

The evaluation of students' progress in writing should begin with the students' own written work. Writing ability cannot be adequately assessed by tests and other formal evaluation alone. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their writing ability in work aimed at various purposes. Students should also be encouraged to develop the critical ability to evaluate their own work, so that they can become effective, independent writers in the world beyond school.

NIGERIAN AND AMERICAN CHILDREN'S READING TODAY--A COMPARATIVE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT.

Osayimwense Osa

In 1983, Marcia Sewall painted a parents' poster, "HAVE YOU READ A BOOK WITH YOUR CHILD TODAY?" for the Children's Book Council. On this attractive poster, a cheerful American paterfamilias sits, an eager and curious American kid on his lap, with a book, *The Story of A Good Dog*, widely opened before him. Beside the paterfamilias on the right, a dog squats in a listening mood as if it understand what is going on, and a pussy cat lies between the paterfamilias's feet. This poster is predicated on the premise that American parents read to or read with their children at home. In some other cultures of the world, this is not so. It is on this note that this article discusses comparatively the socio-cultural context of Nigerian and American children's reading today.

> All individuals live in culturally defined worlds which influence the directions in which their imaginations develop. . . while literature does not mirror either culture or history it is deeply rooted in both. (Schmidt, 1981, p. 194)

In both Nigeria and the United States, a myriad of sources compete for children's attention. While American society is technologically advanced, Nigerian society is not, at least not in the same degree as that of the U. S.

Most children, regardless of cultural milieu, learn by imitation. Nigerian and American children's observation of their elders' reading habits has an impact on the development of their imagination and reading pattern. While most Nigerian and other African adults do not really have a reading habit at home, it is significantly the opposite in the United States. The major result is that American children's reading potential starts taking root in their homes as they watch and participate in their elders' reading. On the other hand, Nigerian children's reading potential does not take root and blossom at home. An explanation for this difference is rooted in culture: unlike Nigerians and other Africans who have traditionally preferred the communal life of involvement to meditating and solitary engagements like reading, most Americans prefer individualistic engagements, among which is reading.

Oral literature abounds in Nigeria primarily because Nigerians have traditionally not derived enjoyment from the printed word. In homes, Nigerian children have always been told stories by their parents or any other adult. But in American homes, while children may be told stories, they are mainly *read to* by their parents or by any other adult. Traditionally, Nigeria

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is not a literate society. In childhood especially, imagination is excited by folktales on moonlit evenings. As Kunle Akinsemoyin (1963) would say:

> Twilight is story time in Nigeria. After the sun has set darkness comes in a few minutes but in those last rays of light the village children gather round the feet of the story teller begging him for a story . . . . they all want a story before bedtime, and they take their places on mats on the floor while the story teller sits on his stool in the middle (p. 9).

This quotation reflects the typical position of the story teller, who is usually an adult, and the eager children in a storytelling session. It also mirrors the Nigerian children's longing for stories. Oral tradition is the stuff on which African children grow up, and it is of course the base from which they take off into the world of literature. Like the family, the neighborhood and the school are rich sources of oral literature for the African child. As a result of the traditional close communal living of black Africans, one often finds neighbors narrating intriguing story bits and fascinating long stories of their community which consequently stamp a young African's mind and become part of it. In school, African children usually listen casually or seriously to the yarns of their classmates, sing songs about African legendary heroes and songs of their communities. Richly fed and nourished early in life on oral tradition, it is not very surprising that the printed word does not readily infiltrate into the African children's world of imagination--their world of story, as does oracy.

Lacking the visual image like oral stories, the radio invites children listeners to fill in the visual action. Evidently the children take part in the radio storytelling by visualizing the action in their imagination. While this radio channel for imaginative experience has a very wide reach in the United States, it has a comparatively limited reach in Nigeria. In America there are radio sets with very clear reception even in the countryside remote from big cities, where sophisticated and powerful radio stations are in abundance. But in Nigeria, reception is sometimes poor even from local radio stations, and not all Nigerian homes have a radio. Subsequently, quite a number of Nigerian children, unlike American children, miss this imaginative experience, which is like a read-alound story.

Unlike the radio, the television channel for imaginative experience is primarily visual. Television is already an integral part of American culture, but it is not yet so in Nigeria. Like the radio, it has a limited reach among Nigerian children and even among Nigerian adults primarily because many, especially in the rural areas, cannot afford to buy them. This is why one cannot strongly assert that the television is a mass medium in Nigeria today. In contemporary United States however, some scholars now question the television as a stimulator of children's imagination. Marie Winn (1977) asserts:

> The television child's opportunities to learn to focus attention sharply and sustain concentration are limited. Indeed, the mental diffuseness demanded by the television experience may cause children who have logged thousands of hours in front of the set to enter the reading world more superficially, more impatiently, more vaguely (p. 67).

In spite of Winn's stance, which has got quite a significant appraisal in the U.S., and in spite of the limited reach of the television and other motion pictures in Nigeria, they are still a rich and promising source of powerful imaginative experience for children. After all, the television is both a powerful audio and visual aid to children's learning as well as to adults' learning. The bad side of television may be in children spending too many hours glued to the set.

Nothing seems to develop children's visual imaginative experience more than the picture book. The visual representation of an idea, a fact or a situation reinforces and gives meaning to what children hear. For children who are still exploring their physical environment, and who are still fascinated by the strange, the graphic representation in their books complements their exploration activity. But Nigerian children are somewhat cut short of this experience for technological development reasons. Printing machinery is not sophisticated enough to produce captivating colored works for children. What is presently available is illustrated books in black and white, not picture books. The need for sophisticated colored drawings has been taken note of, as evidenced from the recommendation of participants at the 1973 international conference on book development and publishing held at the University of Ife, Nigeria:

> It was recommended that general technical competence be improved through workshops, in-service training and particularly through the establishment of printing schools with high standards and modern equipment. . . Governments are urged to give full support, both financial and moral, to technical colleges which are attempting to set up printing programmes (Oluwasanmi et. al, 1975, p.1).

This situation is not so in the U.S. Picture books are highly sophisticated, and prizes like Caldecott exist for excellently illustrated children's books.

Since African children cannot really cultivate a reading habit in the true sense of the word from their parents, who seldom read at home, only the schools, backed by libraries, may help them. In school, children can learn the enjoyment and value inherent in reading, but the reading habit must be sustained even after school days, and for this they must have easy and free access to the library--not necessarily a mere collection of books, but one that can stimulate the children's imagination, kindle their curiousity, act as a knowledge fountain, and generate in them a spontaneous penchant for learning. But today in Nigeria and other African countries, "library service is reasonably good in cities, poor in small towns, and simply non-existent in rural areas" (Onadiran and Onadiran, 1981, p. 411), and this situation retards the nurturing of reading in Nigerian children. On the other hand, in the U.S. libraries abound for children, and accessibility to them is quite easy.

In this article, an attempt has been made to discuss different facets of the socio-cultural factors which presently influence the reading of Nigerian children and American children. Unlike Euro-American culture, children's literature is yet to be a solidly established artifact in Nigeria and the rest of black Africa. Apparently one would therefore expect a difference in various degrees in the development of imagination and reading patterns of Nigerian children and American children.

As more youngsters from different cultures enter American schools, teachers' awareness of their backgrounds becomes increasingly important. Some grew up on oral tradition and some on the written word. The teacher as builder and as trustee of the cultural heritage, which the present generation holds for the enrichment of the next, has a duty to nurture reading in all youngsters without destroying their culture. For the youngsters raised on oral tradition, the teacher needs to introduce them gradually and steadily, rather than abruptly, to the written word. A sudden transition from their oral culture to reading the printed word may permanently damage their reading potential.

For American teachers of language arts who travel outside the United States to Nigeria and elsewhere to teach, an understanding of the socio-cultural background of their students, especially in reading, is quite necessary. Respect for the learner's first language and home culture is primary to the entire educational process, but is inextricably tied to the acquisition of a second language. A concerted effort should be made to maintain and expand the student's language facility in the first language, including literacy (Gonzalez, 1980, p. 69).

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RESOURCES FOR INVOLVING PARENTS IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Myna M. Haussler and Yetta M. Goodman

Parent Role

The idea that parents play a vital role in their children's literacy development is not new. Edmond Huey, in 1908, wrote as follows:

> The child makes endless questionings about the names of things, as every mother knows. He is concerned also about the printed notices, signs, titles, visiting cards, etc., that come in his way, and should be told what they "say" when he makes inquiry. It is surprising how large a stock of printed or written words a child will gradually come to recognize in this way.

In 1934, Nila B. Smith acknowledged that early reading is taught at home rather than at school. Current literacy research, reported by Teale (1981), Doake (1981), Haussler (1982), and Taylor (1983), indicates not only that the amount of adult-child reading and writing interaction before school is important, but also that the quality of the interactions makes a difference. Parents' attitudes toward literacy, the time they spend interacting with children and print, and the accessibility of literacy materials in the home (such as newspapers, books, chalkboards, paper and writing implements) influence children's reading and writing development.

It is thus becoming increasingly important for educators to communicate to parents and child care professionals their crucial role in children's reading and writing development. While face-to-face contact with parents is preferable for establishing cooperation between home and school, it is not always possible. For a variety of legitimate reasons, parents cannot always attend school meetings or conferences. In addition, much of the home literacy environment is well established before parents bring a child to school for the first time. For these reasons, brochures, letters to parents, and educational pamphlets about the role of the home in literacy development provide a valuable line of communication between the home and the school.

Materials for Parents

Many international, national, state, and local organizations (as well as some private publishing companies) have recognized the importance of the parent in literacy development, publishing inexpensive brochures and pamphlets that are useful for parent education. Most of the pamphlets are written with parents as

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their audience and are reasonably priced. Purchasing these pamphlets and finding creative ways for disseminating them at school and in the community is an ideal project for the parent-teacher organizations and other parent or teacher groups.

In addition, teachers and administrators should reach into the larger community to alert other professionals--including noneducators--of the important role they can play in involving parents in literacy education. Schools should look for support for the dissemination of a variety of educational information by pediatricians, dentists, hospitals, childbirth and newborn class teachers, social workers, preschool teachers, and other child care professionals. Such literature should not only emanate from schools but also be distributed at doctors' offices and at other community agencies to provide parents with information about their important role in their children's success in school. In addition, state departments of education, book sellers, or other private industries might be contacted to help with dissemination and financial support.

The brochures or pamphlets may help parents think about their own role in their children's literacy development for the first time. Young parents at a newborn class may discover the importance of reading to their child from an early age or of allowing children to write on chalkboards.

At school, classroom teachers, reading specialists, and school administrators will find these brochures valuable in supplementing classroom reading calendars, newsletters, and personal letters which go home to parents throughout the year. Some are appropriate for explaining the importance of reading at the beginning of the school year; others list book selections which are ideal for sending home at winter holiday times; while still others will encourage summer reading at home.

Teachers and schools can thus build parent and educator cooperation in the development of literacy by becoming disseminators of useful, relevant information. Some resources may be obtained by writing to the organizations listed below. (Please include a #10 self-addressed, stamped envelope.) In addition, local resources should be checked. Many state and local reading, language, and early childhood organizations have a variety of fine brochures. Finally, a list of ERIC documents is presented below as a further source of helpful ideas and materials. With such resources, it is possible for school personnel to show parents and others in the community that schools provide leadership and take seriously the cooperative relationships necessary for literacy development.

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Organizations

American Library Association
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Association for Childhood
Education International
ACEI Publications
3615 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

The Children's Book Council, Inc.
67 Irving
New York, New York 10001

Education Department
Dell Publishing Company, Inc.
245 East 47th Street
New York, New York 10017

International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road
P.O.Box 8139
Newark, Delaware 19711

National Council of Teachers
of English
1111 Kenyon Road
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Scholastic, Inc.
50 West 44th Street
New York, New York 10036

Micromonographs Available from the International Reading Association

What Books and Records Should I Get for My Preschooler?
Norma Rogers

How Can I Help My Child Build Positive Attitudes Toward Reading?
Susan M. Glazer

What Is Reading Readiness?
Norma Rogers

How Can I Help My Child Get Ready to Read?
Norma Rogers

How Can I Help My Child Learn to Read English as a Second Language?
Marcia Baghban

Why Read Aloud to Children?
Julie M. T. Chan

How Does My Child's Vision Affect His Reading?
Donald W. Eberly

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DO-IT-YOURSELF PLACEMENT TESTS

Barbara Kessel and Dolores Rosenbaum

For a long time, we at the YMCA Community College had been concerned to find better and more efficient ways of bringing the majority of our student body from a position of minimal academic skills up to a college or technical school level. As part of a re-design of the entire developmental English program, the authors focused on placement tests that would best sort students for instruction in the communication skills. From this experience, we feel that any English faculty that needs to place students in a segmented, sequential program would do best to assume it as their own task to adapt or create the necessary testing instruments. Moreover, we would like to provoke thought and discussion about the connections between the reading and writing skills, so often tested in complete isolation from one another, as if it were possible that a number of students will be much better in one area than in the other.[1]

Historically, the English Department of our community college was responsible for the placement of students in English courses (two remedial and one 101), which in turn, determined student access to the rest of the curriculum. Many community college English departments have the same valve-and-flow function. In such situations much stress is exerted upon the English teachers 1) from colleagues who are frustrated, either from having students unable to function in their courses, or from too few students eligible for advanced courses, 2) from students who are unhappy with their placement, 3) from administrators, who represent both of these constituency concerns, along with a desire for placement test efficiency and economy. Finally, the English teachers themselves wear two hats: they mark placement tests and they teach the sorted results in English classes. If the sorting is not successful, the resulting ability range of students in a class defies all educational operations, save those in a computerized or a laboratory situation.[2]

Some years of living with frustration accumulated before all signs pointed to change and the department was able to take up the challenge of solving the problem.

For years the teachers of reading in our department had attempted to make content teachers, as well as administration, aware that ability to read college-level material is of critical importance to academic survival. If students cannot comprehend their textbooks, then they certainly cannot write about them. However, a student was never kept from college-level courses solely because of a low reading score. Students who could write a

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personal experience essay on a topic such as "My Most Precious Possession," found the world of college opened to them, for better or, more usually, for worse.

While writing teachers were unhappy with the situation, they saw no exit to the dilemma. Having students write expository themes on topics of general interest had been abandoned years before. Our classes, aside from a considerable number of foreign students, were made up of graduates (or even refugees) from the Chicago Public Schools. The majority of 11th graders in these schools in 1982 read between 4th and 6th grade level according to the Tests of Academic Progress by Houghton Mifflin. Thirty-four out of Chicago's sixty-four high schools scored between the 10th and 19th percential on this test. The bulk of such a population does not read newspapers, or anything that might give them background for exposition on topics of "general interest."

As we met together, with no other agenda than our placement problem, the concept arose of a writing test based on selected readings such as the students would encounter in 101 content courses--perhaps even cuttings from the very textbooks in use. This had the merit of dealing with one end of our reality gap, the true 101 level. What about the other end, the incoming student who could not comprehend those readings, and thus could not produce sensible words about them?

The need to weed out those students with no chance of success at this test brought us to the conclusion, or perhaps the breakthrough discovery, that by administering a pre-requisite reading test, we could determine who should take the writing test. There would be a cut-off level near the reading level of the selections on the writing test, and only those above it would write expository prose on given readings.

The reading teachers were not, however, satisfied with the various standardized reading tests that had been employed in placement for their own classes over the years. With pressure on this test for reliability and validity, a search was launched for the best test. Extensive research led to the cloze test (a generic type, not a brand name). Cloze is a test of reading comprehension in which a prose text is presented with systematic deletions, usually every fifth word, and the student supplies the missing word or chooses it from a multiple-choice list. A sample cloze selection is presented in the Appendix.

The most recent attempt to evaluate the significance or the use of cloze is an annotated bibliography of 1980 (ERIC ED #184 087), which states, "Two generalizations have emerged rather convincingly: 1) Cloze does, in fact, measure comprehension, and 2) Established criteria are relatively stable across population." In addition, the cloze has benefits over the traditional methods of testing comprehesion: read the paragraph--answer the questions. Such benefits are: 1) cloze is easy to construct from a text, 2) cloze can be made from textual material of any difficulty, 3) cloze tests are inexpensive to produce, 4) cloze measures the comprehension process at two points by testing how much knowledge was gleaned from the text surrounding the deletion and how well the information obtained from the text was used to get additional information, and 5) cloze tests provide more reliable results. Studies on the reliability of cloze (Bormuth, 1962) found, "Cloze tests of 50 items provide passage rankings with a reliability correlation of roughly have a reliability correlation of about .84, or only about 71% reliable."

As the project progressed, we found that we had two options: to write our own test from one source, such as a basal reading series, so that readability would be consistent, or to find a ready-made test. Our search led to the New York State's Degrees of Reading Power Test (1977), a 1,754 passage test used for testing comprehension. The passages covered grades one through twelve and utilized many different subject areas. Other states are considering or have adopted it for their use (Marino, 1981). Negotiations with the New York State Board of Education ensued, and we were able to obtain the test. With their permission, we began the effort to create our own test from the huge number of paragraphs available to us.

Rosenbaum was released for this project from all but one developmental class, which she used in testing portions of the material. In true "Hawthorne Effect" fashion, her students thrived on the attention and were anxious to attempt any and all materials given to them. Pilot testing was done in several other developmental classes, in English 101 classes, and in Social Science 201. Results indicated that those students who were or had been successful in English 101 were able to pass the cut-off level, while the developmental students did not do as well, with the exception of Rosenbaum's class. We interpret their exceptional showing as due to the instruction they received in reading comprehension through the repeated use of the cloze, as well as the Hawthorne effect, mentioned previously, of being a special treatment group.

Feedback from students in the pilot study indicated that they like this kind of test. They told us that other reading tests they had taken, i.e., traditional comprehension tests, were boring and made them want to stop or go to sleep, while the cloze kept them awake and interested. A few more factors became clear in these discussions: 1) The students who were unfamiliar with the cloze type of test stated that a sample should have been given to them as a run-through prior to the actual test. We heeded their suggestion and incorporated a practice selection for the test administrator (a counselor in our case) to take the students through before the actual test. 2) The answer sheet was a mechanically-scored one, and we were reminded that new foreign students are not familiar with this type of answer sheet and have great difficulty filling in the blanks. Therefore, careful instructions on how to mark the answer sheet were also incorporated into the manual as part of the pre-test sample cloze exercise.

Forms A and B of the new test consisted of test paragraphs taken from fifth to tenth grade passages, to form an eight-paragraph test with eighty multiple-choice items. The passage on which a student scored less than 80% correct determined the remedial level placement. Students who had 80% correct through the top or tenth grade level, were asked to stay after the math placement test (during which time the reading tests were machine scored) and take a writing test.

The construction of the writing test also involved a search and departmental experimentation. We attempted to make up a test on the model of one used by the English Composition Board at the University of Michigan, presented at the Spring 1981 MOEP Conference (Mid-American Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel), and brought back to us by reading teacher, Ms. Gwendolyn Lee. The structure of the model is this:

Reading Selection, 2-3 pages long

"Begin your essay with the following sentence: xxxxxxxxxxx"

"Select one of the following as your second sentence:"

A. xxxxxxxxxxxxx
B. xxxxxxxxxxxxx
C. xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Each second sentence expresses a markedly different opinion concerning the essay. (See Appendix for a sample assignment.)

We decided that this model would indicate more clearly than any set of instructions we could write, the type of composition we were asking for. For reading selections we decided to solicit textual excerpts from other academic departments. This was for two reasons: to give the students a real choice of subject matter and motivation if one of the selections was from a curricular area ot their choice, and to make other academic areas part of the placement process which so concerned them. In terms of the latter goal, the results were good and bad. The Departments of Business, Psychology, Science, Humanities, Secretarial Science, and Philosophy responded very positively to the request and gave us reading selections from their introductory textbooks. Each teacher in the English Department took a reading selection and wrote the first sentence and three second sentences for the model. We found that the majority of selections were impossible to work with in this way, either because they were too difficult (laissez-faire vs. monopoly capitalism), or because the material did not allow for a variety of interpretations on the layman's level (the structure of a cell). However, four remained as worthy of submitting to be tested on students, including the one shown in the Appendix. In future sets, the procedure was modified. Every eight weeks a new set of four was needed, that being the length of our intensive developmental courses. The second set was made up by the authors of this article, and succeeding sets were constructed by the teachers of the level immediately below 101, whose students had to pass the test as entrance into the 101 level. Each of those four teachers took responsibility for finding one reading, still emphasizing subject areas other than literature, and writing the opening sentences. They reviewed each other's work and often sent one another back to the drafting table.

After the first trial of our new tests, there was great satisfaction with the way it placed students for the purposes of instruction, but teachers felt the the reading test pre-requisite should be raised another grade level, because too many of the writing tests were not "in the ballpark." This was easily done by the addition of two new cloze paragraphs, and the next several testing periods were entirely satisfactory, with most of the written tests being at least contenders for the 101 level. We had always had some flexibility within our department, which we retained, so that if the teacher spotted a student who should be moved up or down, it could be done in the first week. However, with the new tests this was less often necessary.

How do you test the test? When you change courses at the same time, you obviously cannot. We had a different number of levels with different curricula under the previous system. All we can say is that it worked for us, probably because we made up the tests to suit our own purposes as a school. The students liked having a choice in the writing tests. Students who were poor writers were so relieved at not having to display their writing ability that we had not one complaint in the entire year from the two-thirds who took only the reading test and were placed in developmental reading/writing courses. The old universal writing tests had always provoked a fair number of complaints that the students did not know "what we wanted."

The administration was delighted at having both a simpler process and one in which students were never kept waiting for days in the registration process. They were also relieved that our colleagues in other departments were happier with this system.

Of course, it was the English Department that had the most to celebrate. We would much rather spend some of our energy in the creation of interesting tests (the writing test is kind of fun to make up in this format), than in the reading of stacks of miserable papers. We felt that the tests placed students much better, eliminating from higher levels the kind of writer who could punctuate and spell, but not say anything, as well as the imaginative folk, whose flash of wit in the piles of papers had earned them a 101 despite serious problems. We could use rhetoric books now in 101 and 102, and teach students to write in the various rhetorical forms. Most of all, we could hold our heads up proudly because the written test really manifested the goals of our department. Both the reading and writing tests were custom-made to suit our unique (and hopefully, somewhat extreme) situation. We could change them and fine-tune them in accordance with our needs. In the old days, placement tests had produced a kind of fall-out result that rained into our classrooms; now we controlled the placement process.

Whatever your situation, your placement process should produce results that you can live with educationally, so that you as a teacher can produce the maximum results in your students. If your own placement system is outdated, or never fit in the first place, you don't have to tolerate the frustration. Get together with other interested parties and make your own.

Notes

1. The classic study conducted with a large population over a period of thirteen years concerning rates of development of all the language arts abilities showed a high degree of unity for reading, writing, and speech. Walter Loban, Stages, Velocity, and Prediction of Language Development: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve, Final Report, Office of Education, Bureau of Research, U.S. Department of HEW, 1970.

2. It is not our concern here to judge the merits of computerized or laboratory-tutorial English, but simply to note that it was not financially feasible to open up these existing islands to the entire student body.

3. Ruth B. Love, Report to the President of the Chicago Board of Education, April 20, 1982.

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Appendix

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

BUSINESS/SOCIAL STUDIES

DIRECTIONS: Read the attached article and follow the directions for writing your essay. Your essay should be 4 to 6 paragraphs in length.

ASSIGNMENT: The test speaks of government-initiated affirmative action and business-initiated affirmative action. Which do you think would be the most effective means to guarantee equal opportunity in the work place?

BEGIN your essay with the following sentence:

> In the past several years, our society has been operating under government guidelines which force large companies to have affirmative action plans.

SELECT ONE of the following as your second sentence:

A. Now it is time for a change.

B. Today, we see the benefits that have come from this policy.

C. Although these plans have been an improvement over the past inaction, they leave a lot to be desired.

COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT, WRITING AN ESSAY OF 4 TO 6 PARAGRAPHS.

OPTION: BUSINESS/SOCIAL STUDIES

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF BUSINESS

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

A socioeconomic problem that is receiving major attention from business is the discrimination in employment and income that women and members of minority groups have traditionally faced.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Society has traditionally assigned certain roles to men. Higher-paid occupations such as physician, dentist, airline pilot, architect, and certified public accountant are male-dominated. However, more women are beginning to enter these male-intensive occupations.

Women have also made inroads into the traditionally male-intensive category of the self-employed. In the mid-1970s, 26 percent of self-employed persons were women, compared with only 17 percent in 1940.

The changing job interests of women - Because women typically are spending more than 20 years of their adult lives working outside the home, they are becoming more career-minded while attending school and in choosing an occupation. Women now view paid employment not just as an interlude between completion of their formal education and marriage, but as a long-range commitment. Therefore, the choice of an occupation and the satisfactions of a particular job have become more important to them. These changes in women's attitudes toward careers have important implications for employers in their hiring, training, and promotion of women.

MINORITY EMPLOYMENT

The largest minority group in American society are the Blacks, who make up 11.5 percent of the population. The second largest minority group are the Spanish-speaking Americans, who account for about 5 percent of the population. Asian-Americans comprise about 1 percent of the population. Less than one half of 1 percent are American Indians.

The occupational status of minorities - Like women, members of minority groups are generally concentrated in occupations and industries with the lowest earning potential. However, in recent years, there has been improvement in the occupational status of blacks and other minorities.

There have been significant increases in the proportion of male minority workers who hold white-collar jobs, especially as professional and technical workers. More members of minority groups are being employed in skilled craft positions. Also, significantly more black males are being hired and trained for managerial positions.

GOVERNMENT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACTIONS

Government action to improve the employment status of women and minorities has come through legislation, court decisions, and executive orders.

COURT DECISIONS

Women and minorities have turned increasingly to the courts to overcome discrimination by employers and unions. When discrimination is determined to exist, the courts have ordered employers to establish affirmative action plans. An affirmative action plan begins with an analysis by the enterprise of its present work force to identify jobs and departments where few women or members of minority groups are employed. Then, specific hiring and promotion goals are set up to compensate for the effects of past discrimination. The goal of affirmative action is the measurable, yearly improvement in hiring, training, and promoting minorities and women throughout the business enterprise.

BUSINESS ACTIONS IN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT

Management can develop its own non-discriminatory employment system. This involves a commitment throughout the enterprise to provide opportunity for equal employment. The present work force should be analyzed to determine where minorities and women are underutilized. Specific hiring and promotion goals for minorities and women need to be set, with target dates for attaining these goals. All employees should be committed to the enterprise's affirmative action program, if the program is to be successful.

Some job descriptions may need to be revised if they specify higher qualifications than are necessary to perform the job. For example, requiring a high-school education as a condition of employment or promotion tends to disqualify minorities at a higher rate than others. For some blue-collar jobs, there is no evidence that a high-school education is necessary for satisfactory performance.

Care can be taken to ensure that help-wanted ads do not indicate any race, sex, or age preference. If a job opening has traditionally been typed as "male" or "female", the help-wanted ad can emphasize interest in recruiting both sexes.

Discrimination is most likely to occur in the process of selecting the employee for the job. Care needs to be taken that any tests used are valid predictors of success for the job in question. Instead of traditional tests, a work-sample technique may be used. For example, an applicant for a production job could be asked to assemble nuts and bolts, or electrical components in a certain sequence. This would test the applicant's manual dexterity, ability to follow directions, and tolerance for repetitive routine.

The person who conducts the job interview should be free of stereotyped images about minorities' or women's abilities for particular jobs. One commonly held stereotype is that women are more prone to absenteeism or job turnover than men. However, studies show that there is little differenece in the absentee rates of men and women. Job turnover is more related to the type of job and the level of pay than to sex. The applicant's previous work record is usually the most valid evidence of employee stability.

Management and unions can adopt company-wide promotion plans and publicize job promotion opportunities to all workers. Apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and mangement development programs should also be open to all employees.

An example of what business is doing to provide job training and opportunities for the hard-core unemployed is the National Alliance of Businessmen. This organization was formed after the Detroit riots of 1967 to expand employment opportunities, especially for persons who had been considered unemployable because of a lack of job skills. Many large corporations and thousands of smaller business enterprises are participating in this program.

CLOZE PASSAGE ONE

The Watergate case is significant because it is __1__ than an isolated scandal. The __2__ thus far cast new __3__ on all of the political __4__ and much of the __5__ policymaking of the Nixon Administration. What can be __6__ is profoundly disturbing. Senior White House __7__ and an Attorney General who __8__ as the President's chief __9__ adviser ran the Administration as if it were an __10__ agency.

1. A. luckier
   B. cleaner
   C. sterner
   D. more
   E. drier

2. A. accidents
   B. currents
   C. revelation
   D. incentives
   E. relatives

3. A. pork
   B. leather
   C. light
   D. honey
   E. mortar

4. A. earthquakes
   B. cartoons
   C. blizzards
   D. operations
   E. trailers

6. A. sung
   B. supported
   C. snapped
   D. seen
   E. orbited

7. A. cakes
   B. tails
   C. aides
   D. tints
   E. stables

8. A. lunched
   B. trickled
   C. applauded
   D. proved
   E. doubled

9. A. liberal
   B. political
   C. diplomatic
   D. conservative
   E. communist

5. A. civil
B. communist
C. judiciary
D. domestic
E. supreme

10. A. intelligence
B. abandoned
C. immediate
D. accurate
E. emerald

VOCABULARY

Richard E. Hodges

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean. . . ."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master--that's all." (Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass, 1972)

The nature and origins of words have long held a fascination for interested scholars and lay public, not only to satisfy intellectual curiosities, but also because word knowledge has particular importance in literate societies. For the same reasons, scholarly interests have turned toward determining the nature of vocabulary development--that is, how and to what extent speakers and writers of English become, like Humpty Dumpty, masters of our lexical stock.

The outcomes of these investigations are of more than passing interest to educators; for word knowledge contributes significantly to achievement in the subjects of the school curriculum, as well as in formal and informal speaking and writing. In fact, a substantial body of research has been published in this century concerning the educational implications of these vocabulary studies (Dale and Razik 1963). The purpose of this digest, then, is to summarize briefly how these interests are expressed in current literature and to suggest some sources available for further reading.

Definition of Vocabulary

The vocabulary, or lexicon, of a language encompasses the stock of words of that language which is at the disposal of a speaker or writer. Contained within this lexical storehouse is a core vocabulary of the words used to name common and fundamental concepts and situations of a culture, as well as subsets of words that result from one's personal, social, and occupational experiences. Probably the most important influence on one's speech is the simple circumstance of the language spoken in the country of one's birth. Each of us grows up interacting with and interpreting the world around us, to a large degree through the medium of language.

Sources of English Vocabulary

Languages are as vibrant and dynamic as the cultures of which they are a part, and the lexical stock of a langage is a

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vivid example of this linguistic principle. Words are, after all, no more than labels for concepts about the world around us, and as new concepts emerge or old ones change the lexical stock changes accordingly. It is a linguistic paradox that change is constant when applied to vocabulary. Many words in common use 200 years ago are now obsolete, just as many words in use today will be tomorrow's artifacts.

The English language is no exception, with a lexicon that reflects its many sources of origin and the effects of change over time. Besides the core stock of words rooted in Anglo-Saxon beginnings, English contains additional thousands of words borrowed from language communities with whom we have come in contact. Both of these sources have provided yet more words--those that have been derived from earlier word forms by addition of prefixes and suffixes or those that have been shifted to new grammatical functions. Still more words have emerged by the process of compounding in which existing words are joined to form new combining parts of words, or simply by creating new words out of "whole cloth." The ingredients of our lexical stock are indeed rich and varied. (See Bolton 1982, Francis 1965, Laird 1981, Pyles 1971, Shipley 1977.)

Vocabulary Development

We do not learn most of our words by looking them up in a dictionary. Rather, we learn them in the context of our experiences with listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Many studies have been undertaken to determine the nature and extent of children's vocabulary development (Petty, Herold, and Stoll 1968). These studies demonstrate the truly prodigious linguistic accomplishments that children attain by the time they reach school age. While estimates vary, by age six most children have active vocabularies numbering in the several thousands of words (deVilliers 1978).

There is, however, an important difference between knowing words and understanding their broad range of uses and referents. For vocabulary development is first and foremost a matter of concept development. For this reason considerable attention has been turned in recent years to children's semantic development; that is, to the development of word meaning. (See Anglin 1970, deVilliers 1978, Foss and Hakes 1978.) These studies illustrate that how words are used, not their length or frequency of use, indicates children's lexical maturity and, commonly, their intellectual maturity as well (Straw 1981, 185).

Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary development is, of course, a lifetime undertaking in which schools play a critical role in enriching and extending the young child's basic lexical repertoire, particularly through the medium of written language. Yet, "it is not the enlargement of vocabulary itself that is of value but the enlargement of the mind to new ideas" (Petty, Herold, and Stoll 1968). For this reason, vocabulary instruction properly belongs in all subjects of the curriculum in which students meet both new ideas and the words by which they are represented in the language.

The opportunities for vocabulary instruction are especially pronounced, however, in language arts and reading where words themselves can be an appropriate focus of study. Bearing in mind the dictum that knowledge of word meaning is the ultimate objective of study, teachers can provide numerous opportunities for students to explore the origins and forms of words as a means of extending and enriching their word knowledge. (See Dale and O'Rourke 1971, Hodges 1982, Johnson and Pearson 1984.)

Teachers can also use students' personal experiences and prior knowledge to develop vocabulary in the classroom. Through informal activities such as _semantic association_ students brainstorm a list of words associated with a familiar word, pooling their knowledge of pertinent vocabulary as they discuss the less familiar words on the list. _Semantic mapping_ goes a step further, grouping the words on the list into categories and arranging them on the visual "map" so that relationships among the words become clearer. In _semantic feature analysis_ words are grouped according to certain features, usually with the aid of a chart that graphically depicts similarities and differences among features of different words. Finally, _analogies_ are a useful way of encouraging thoughtful discussion about relationships among meanings of words. (See Johnson and Pearson 1984, 33-50, for illustrations of these activities.)

The linguist W. N. Francis once commented that "many people. . . go through life with a vocabulary adequate only to their daily needs Others are wordlovers--collectors and connoisseurs. . . .But even those who aspire no further than to the writing of good clear expository prose must become at least amateur connoisseurs of words. Only this way--not by formal exercises or courses in vocabulary building--will they learn to make the best possible use of the vast and remarkable lexicon of English" (Francis 1965, 164-65).

The success or failure of schooling to foster word knowledge is in large part dependent upon teacher attitude toward vocabulary. Thus, in the final analysis, teachers who are "wordlovers" themselves provide students both with a potent example of the value and pleasure that can be derived from exploring the richness and diversity of the English lexicon, and with classroom contexts for such exploration by drawing on students' shared experiences. Students may thus learn that language learning is a lifelong venture, one in which written language plays a particularly important role. Every contact with written language affords an opportunity to learn more not only about the writing system we use--its structure and how words are spelled--but also about the meanings and uses of words themselves.

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THE CASE: WRITING AS A REMEDIATION DEVICE FOR DISABLED READERS

Margaret H. Hill

My own children and the many school age and preschool children I've taught have made me aware that we can teach effective and efficient reading through writing. The research shows writing in preschool and primer levels does help children learn to read. Van Allen's (1976) Language Experience Approach is rich with such evidence. He has taken a clue from 90% of the beginning school population who say they can already write when they enter school, while only 10% say they can read. The very successful Language Experience Approach takes advantage of this early writing motivation. It is based upon the premise that a child brings a tremendous knowledge of language structure with him to school and-presto--a wonderfully rich reading program is at your fingertips.

However, the lure of the basals is tremendous, as we see some 95% of the classrooms in our country fall prey to their mold. And while offering a wonderfully rich and varied eclectic approach, they lack a serious major component--writing in connected context. From the myriad of worksheets, writing is reduced to underlining, filling in the blanks, and matching words. Both reading and writing are fragmented as the student unlocks key words in isolated sentences. Writing is definitely not used as a multisensory approach in this context, nor does it involve continuous, structured development of thought. We have just thrown out the wonderful learning tool which 90% of the school children believe they possess when they first come to school.

So let's look at the research evidence as we try to answer these questions. Is writing really a developmental step for beginning readers? If so, can it also help the older disabled reader? And to help the disabled reader should we revamp our present style of teaching reading through a myriad of worksheets--short answers, fill in the blanks and multiple choice answers--to lessons which require more connected writing? I propose that the answer is an overwhelming "yes" to all three questions. Let's look at the evidence from research and the results of remediation using the writing process.

EVIDENCE: WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT WRITING IS A NATURAL INTEGRAL PART OF LEARNING TO READ?

Research has come to us from a number of sources. Clay (1982) reports that children develop their own hypotheses and need to play with language they are developing. They do this through writing and scribbling. Chomsky (1971) elicits information to indicate that children learn by building their words through the sounds they make. They like to see what these sounds look like in print. Natural order must be accepted, and when

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children build words by writing them and then by reading their own words, this is a natural process. It is unnatural and backwards, she says, to have them first read the writing of others before their own. Dyson (1982) and Goodman (1983) state that a rich home environment creates language skills which are both natural and purposeful. Exercises such as writing notes to other members of the family, market lists, and thank-you letters have a purpose and are meaningful to the language user. Haley-James (1982) indicates that children write when they find a need to communicate. Through this type of learning, they associate a meaningful sound-symbol relationship.

Much evidence supports writing as a valuable tool for beginning readers. It is seen as a significant developmental step in the process of reading because, as learnars learn to write the words, they learn to read the words they and others have written.

EVIDENCE: WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT WRITING ALSO HELPS THE OLDER DISABLED READER TO READ?

Research indicates that writing will help the older disabled reader to comprehend written material more effectively. How? Lack of syntactic stucture is a major deficit of the reading disabled child. Without this innate sense, readers are unable to use their prediction skills effectively. Research submitted (Stilley, 1981, Mackie, 1981, Leu, 1982, Reid, 1982, White, 1981, Mavrogenes, 1982, Smith , 1982, Hook, 1978, Groves, 1978, Flood and Menyuk, 1982, and Anderson, 1982) presents evidence that many remedial readers indicate a weakness in syntactical application. This research suggests the need for a remediation program which will develop a sense of syntactic awareness for the disabled readers. How then can we build a syntactical awareness? The answer lies with the third piece of evidence presented.

EVIDENCE: WHAT EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT WE SHOULD THROW OUT THE WORKSHEETS AND REVAMP OUR READING PROGRAM FOR OLDER REMEDIAL READERS? ALSO, WHAT MATERIALS AND PROGRAMS SHOULD WE USE WHICH WILL DEVELOP A SYNTACTIC AWARENESS WITHIN THE READER?

Most of the aforementioned researchers suggest a remediation program which involves sentence analysis and sentence combining in a meaningful, relevant way. They believe that if students understand how to write with increasing complexity, then they will be able to read and comprehend more complex writing styles. Thus as in the Language Experience Approach, the program starts with the structure the student understands and then builds from there. To increase understanding of more complex syntax, researchers suggest that students learn to build complexity from basic kernel sentences, work on revisions of peer papers, and work with cloze exercises. They do not suggest fill-in-the-blank basal worksheets.

Remedial readers seem to need to understand how to develop their own type of internal organization or structure so that building "file folders" in their heads will develop. Writing is a major tool to help build this structure, because it is concrete and it involves the use of a powerful multisensory learning motif. Remedial reading programs which have developed such a structure with which students interact and later develop for themselves have proven most successful. What are they?

Collins (1981), Gaskin (1982), Hoffman (1983), and Ouzts (1983) have all researched methods of journal writing and their impact upon reading remediation. Hoffman (1983) reports that the journal is a tremendous self-organizing tool. He asks in his journal assignments for students to evaluate themselves and the effectiveness of their study habits. From their writing, students learn to develop an organization for themselves. Gaskin's (1983) journal assignment indicates that students are more able to use complex language structure with familar topics. Later this structure can be transferred to unfamilar topics. And Collins (1981) and Ouzts (1983) both determine from their journal writing assignments with their classes that students develop a more positive attitude towards writing and also towards themselves. An increase in reading comprehension is a positive by-product of this experiment.

Sanacore's (1983) research presents a model as a structural tool. His research introduces students to three types of discourse: descriptive, narrative, and expository. He believes that if students are more aware of the different styles, their reading comprehension will also improve. Crismore (1981), Wittrock (1983), Stotsky (1983) and Nichols (1980) present specific structures to further help remedial readers. They've found summaries, story frames, critical analyses, outlining, clustering, chunking, and categorizing are all methods which emphasize a structure and help disabled readers increase their reading comprehension.

The articles cited here reveal a disabled reader who is weak in syntactic structure. Because reading disability is a multifaceted syndrome, the structure given here allows students to develop their own best learning devices through organizational patterns best suited to them. Writing is easily adjusted to fit many learning styles. It offers a concrete, tactile, kinesthetic remediation approach for the disabled reader. It offers a concrete structure and a better understanding of syntactics as well as offering students structure for their own particular cognitive styles of learning.

Below is a concrete diagram I devised to illustrate the three facets of a writing-to-read approach: the learner, the style of remediation and the materials and teachniques used. An integration of these three aspects is crucial for the evolution and development of learning to read through the writing process.

Writing is a multisensory approach which can be easily adapted to many learning styles. The materials (pencil and paper) are readily available. It is an effective remediation device for disabled readers. Concretely it helps them to establish a structure for reading, which in essence is a syntactic awareness of print. With this awareness, students will be better able to understand the structure and organization of reading materials. Thus they are armed with one more tool to their reading comprehension.

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ISSUES IN DESIGNING THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

Marlow Ediger

When designing a relevant curriculum, there are numerous issues which language arts teachers need to consider and analyze. The following are significant questions which must be answered in order to determine the best possible way of helping particular students to learn.

1. How should the objectives of the curriculum be determined?

2. What should the scope of the curriculum emphasize?

3. Who should sequence learnings for students?

4. Should a deductive or an inductive methodology be used?

5. What aids (textbooks, workbooks, CAI, teacher materials) can best facilitate learning?

6. How should the curriculum be organized?

OBJECTIVES

Objectives can be categorized as including understandings, skills, and attitudes. Understandings relate to learning of subject matter; skills include abilities that will enable students to read and write more effectively; attitudes comprise values and interests.

A major question might be who should be involved in determining objectives in language arts--teachers, supervisors, students, parents, or interested lay people, such as individuals from the business world?

A second question is which understandings, skills, and attitudes should be emphasized in the curriculum. If emphasis is placed on understandings, of paramount importance will be facts, concepts, and generalizations. Basal textbooks, related workbooks, and worksheets will aid learners to gain vital subject matter knowledge.

If emphasis is placed on skills, students will be expected to develop abilities in word recognition techniques, including phonics, syllabication, structural analysis, context clues, and the like. They will also be expected to comprehend content--facts, directions, and sequence of subject matter--through critical reading, creative reading, and scanning. Teachers stressing skills objectives need to select carefully after

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studying learner needs and the instructors' manuals of basal textbooks.

If emphasis is placed on attitudes, students will be expected to read and write for the following purposes: enjoyment and appreciation, personal development and self-actualization, problem-solving and creative endeavors, guidance and talent development.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Scope and sequence are vital concepts to consider. Scope pertains to what should be taught. Sequence pertains to when selected learnings should be emphasized in teaching situations.

In determining scope, some questions to consider are as follows:

1. What should be the breadth of objectives? If objectives need to be deleted for lack of time, which should be deleted--acquiring subject matter, achieving abilities, or developing positive attitudes?

2. Are certain objectives more basic or essential to achieve than others?--understanding, skills, or attitudes? Which of the three categories should receive major emphasis? Which can be considered as enrichment or incidental only?

Order in attaining objectives is highly relevant to consider. For optimum student achievement, sequence is essential. This is true both within a grade level and from one level to another.

Pertaining to sequence in learning, Gagne writes:

> Most investigators of the process of instruction acknowledge the importance for planning of finding out what the learner brings to the learning situation. Glaser (1967), for example, has often emphasized the importance of entering behavior as a critical element in instructional design. The point of view elaborated here is that certain previously learned capabilities need to be retrieved from the long-term memory and need to be readily accessible in the working memory, whenever a new capability is learned. These resultants of prior learning may support the new learning; an example is the retrieval of a cognitive strategy which permits the encoding of to-be-learned information. At least an equally important function of retrieval of previously learned entities, however, is their incorporation into new learning. When the intellectual skill of adding integers is learned, the previously acquired skill of subtracting whole numbers is incorporated as a part of the new capability. Similarly, when the intellectual skill of making the subject of a clause agree in number with its verb, the previously learned skills of identifying subject and verb are incorporated into the newly learned skill (1977).

A question to consider is whether sequence should be determined by teachers, following ordered stories from basal texts

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or whether order in learning resides within the learner. If sequence comes from textbooks, then the textbook writers determine it. Or the teacher might make a few modifications based on learner needs and interests. If sequence comes from students, then each one might, for example, choose the order of library books to read and report upon. An involved learner might also decide upon means of reporting progress in reading.

METHODOLOGY

Either a deductive or an inductive methodology may be utilized. In deductive learning, learners are receivers of facts, concepts, and generalizations. This is reception learning. Despite myths to the contrary, quality learning can indeed occur with students being recipients of subject matter if teachers can explain learnings in a meaningful way to students, perhaps with the assistance of concrete objects and items and semi-concrete aids (illustrations, films, filmstrips, slides, and transparencies).

The opposite of deductive is inductive learning. Here teachers and students need to be able to raise stimulating questions. Opportunities must then be given to ponder, reflect, analyze, and perhaps utilize research mthods to acquire vital data.. Answers to questions or hypotheses are developed by learners. The teacher needs to provide situations whereby students may test and revise, if necessary, their hypotheses. Problems to be solved should be significant to students, meaningful, understandable, interesting enough to capture student attention, pertinent to life in school and society, and related to provision made for individual differences among learners.

Inductive learning has many advantages; "educators have rather recently stressed the importance of pupils achieving learnings inductively. Thus, in inductive learning, the role of the teacher consists of

1. guiding pupil achievement rather that serving as a lecturer or explainer of content.
2. stimulating pupils in identifying problems and working toward desired solutions.
3. being a good asker of questions rather than a dispenser of information.
4. helping pupils realize desired generalizations and main ideas as a result of interacting with a variety of learning epxeriences.
5. developing positive attitudes within learners in wanting to discover facts, concepts, conclusions, and methods of working.
6. helping pupils obtain needed materials and aids necessary in inductive learning" (Ediger, 1977).

There are however, other factors that should be carefully considered by teachers. "Disadvantages given for inductive learning include the following:

1. It may take much time in helping pupils achieve learnings inductively as compared to deductively.
2. It may not be necessary for pupils to discover content which has been discovered and recorded by others.

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3. Deductive learnings may be presented to pupils in a purposeful and interesting manner.

4. A skillful and responsible teacher can teach well using either the inductive or deductive approach" (Ediger, 1977).

Especially useful for inductive learning is the Utilitarian Purpose approach. Utilitarian means emphasize that which is useful to students in school and society. Teachers and students first identify vital problems which need solving, then gather information from reliable reference sources. They develop hypotheses, test them in functional activities and experiences, and revise them, if necessary.

Thus in the language arts, an actual business letter may need to be written by learners, individually or in committees, to order needed materials for a lesson or unit. To achieve the utilitarian purpose, the student--with teacher guidance--needs to study proper models for a business letter, use a recommended model in actually composing the letter, then proofread and make revisions in the letter where necessary, address and mail it, and finally evaluate the response to the mailed letter. Modified approaches may need to be used in ensuing situations to achieve the writing of quality business letters.

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Kennedy (1975) lists the following possible writing activities for students:

1. Situations requiring letters: social notes of thanks, sympathy, invitation, etc.; business letters, orders for materials, preparations for trips, requests for information; friendly letters to pen pals or friends; gift tags and greeting cards.

2. Situations needing a record: plans, class activities, sporting events, excursions, science discoveries, club minutes, room histories or logs.

3. Situations requiring filling out of forms: registration slips, examination blanks, applications; telegrams, cablegrams, messages.

4. Situations requiring reports by individuals, panel discussions, directions and recipes, lists of materials needed for class activities, copying of information or directions.

5. Situations needing publicity: advertisements, notices, announcements; articles for room newspapers; headlines for news articles, legends for bulletin boards and exhibits, lists of room duties.

6. Situations stimulating word pictures of people and places, editorials and news stories, mathematics games and puzzles (175).

The advantage of a utilitarian approach is that it addresses practical needs of students in school and in society. It does not advocate teacher-determined objectives, learning activities, and evaluation of student progress. It would de-emphasize any content not directly useful in society, and it does not propose a structured curriculum common to all students.

LEARNING AIDS

Particularly useful for the inductive approach are basal readers, textbooks, and workbooks. Many teachers make rather heavy use of these in teaching the language arts. These materials need to be carefully selected in terms of quality criteria, and presentations made by the teacher based on their use should be:

1. challenging, to aid each student to attain optimally;
2. purposeful so that learners will perceive value in studying and learning;
3. functional, in that knowledge acquired can be utilized in new situations;
4. meaningful, so that students understand vital facts, concepts, and generalizations;
5. interesting, in order to motivate learner achievement.

The major advantage of using textbooks and workbooks is that what students learn is determined by specialists; but other specialists see a danger. Wilson and Hall (1972) say,

> After assessing text materials, the teacher will realize that, regardless of what he does to adapt it, certain material is not appropriate for particular children. In such situations, a teacher has several alternatives. First, he may ask other pupils to read to those students for whom a book is too difficult. Second, he may decide that instruction should take a form other than reading, in which case he will tend to rely more heavily on pictures, film strips, and discussions than on independent reading. Third, he may locate alternative materials which cover the same content more simply, making it possible for children to learn the content without being frustrated by reading difficulty(203).

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Those opposed to the heavy use of textbooks and workbooks recommend that a variety of activities and experiences be available to learners and that students be involved in identifying relevant objectives, determining preferred learning styles, and choosing quality learning activities. Thus sequence resides within the student, not within the confines of published, printed materials; furthermore students are involved in appraising their own achievement.

A learning aid only recently available for educational purposes is the computer. Depending on the programming, computers can make use of either deductive or inductive approaches. In a relevant language arts curriculum, computer assisted instruction has much to offer students. Gibson (1976) writes,

> The computer has a remarkable capacity for collecting, processing, storing, and retrieving large amounts of information. This is its key asset in an educational program. Individualized instruction methods have particular need for computer assistance. The computer can provide background data for each student and can store test results. It can provide a complete listing of the materials

> used by each student during each class. The computer evaluates and scores student responses with remarkable speed. It develops special plans of study geared to the individual learner (321-322).

Here is an example of a computer-assisted sequence:

1. The student types in his or her name on the keyboard.

2. One or a few sentences appear on the screen. The student reads the text.

3. The student types in a response to a question that appears on the screen in relation to the text read. For example, a student may type in a, b, c, or d, in answer to a multiple-choice question.

4. A correct response might produce a happy face on the screen; an incorrect response a "try again." After a second incorrect response, the correct answer will usually be shown, followed in some cases by an explanation.

4. A tabulation of percent of correct responses for a given lesson or unit is usually shown for each student.

Computers have the advantage of emphasizing success; students can be highly successful in each sequential step in a learning program, no matter how long it may take any individual student to attain that success. Furthermore, computers are not judgmental. But computer-assisted-instruction does not emphasize teacher-student planning of objectives and learning activities, learners' involvement in their own learning styles, or student self-evaluation in terms of personally developed criteria. Still it can be a valuable enhancement to many educational programs.

Quality computer software needs to be selected on the basis of

1. providing sequential learning,
2. containing vital content,
3. ensuring optimal success in learning,
4. being relatively easy for students to use,
5. giving students quality feedback.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CURRICULUM

How should the language arts curriculum be organized? Toward one end of the continuum a separate subjects approach may be emphasized. Here reading would be taught as unrelated to mathematics, science, social studies, or other curriculum areas, all of which would be taught separately. Reading would then have its own scope and sequence, emphasizing such skills as word attack and comprehension, for example.

Or a correlated approach might be preferred, in which reading might be related to social studies. If a story in a basal reader had relevance to a social studies unit currently being taught, then its emphasis would be on correlation of content.

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The fused curriculum relates all language arts areas. Thus listening, speaking, writing, spelling, reading, handwriting, punctuation, and capitalization are fused, and separate distinctions are not emphasized. The teacher emphasizes relationships among all these diverse language arts areas.

The integrated curriculum relates all academic areas. Within this curriculum academic disciplines such as mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts tend to lose their individual boundaries.

A crucial question, then, might be how best to decide whether a separate subjects, correlated, fused, or integrated curriculum organization will be most effective. According to Shepherd and Ragan (1982), curriculum oganization should help to coordinate the efforts of teachers, should provide a well-balanced school day for boys and girls, should provide for continuity in the development of the child, should provide for unified learnings, should assimilate the best information from all sources, and should take into account the principles of quality, equality, relevancy, and personalization (77-78).

To sum up: in attempting to synthesize the issues which have been presented here, it may be helpful to keep in mind that, whatever approaches and methods of organization are chosen, students need to perceive interest in learning, meaningful learnings should be in evidence, and purposes or reasons for participating in particular activities need to be an ongoing emphasis. Thus all students can be guided to optimum achievement.

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